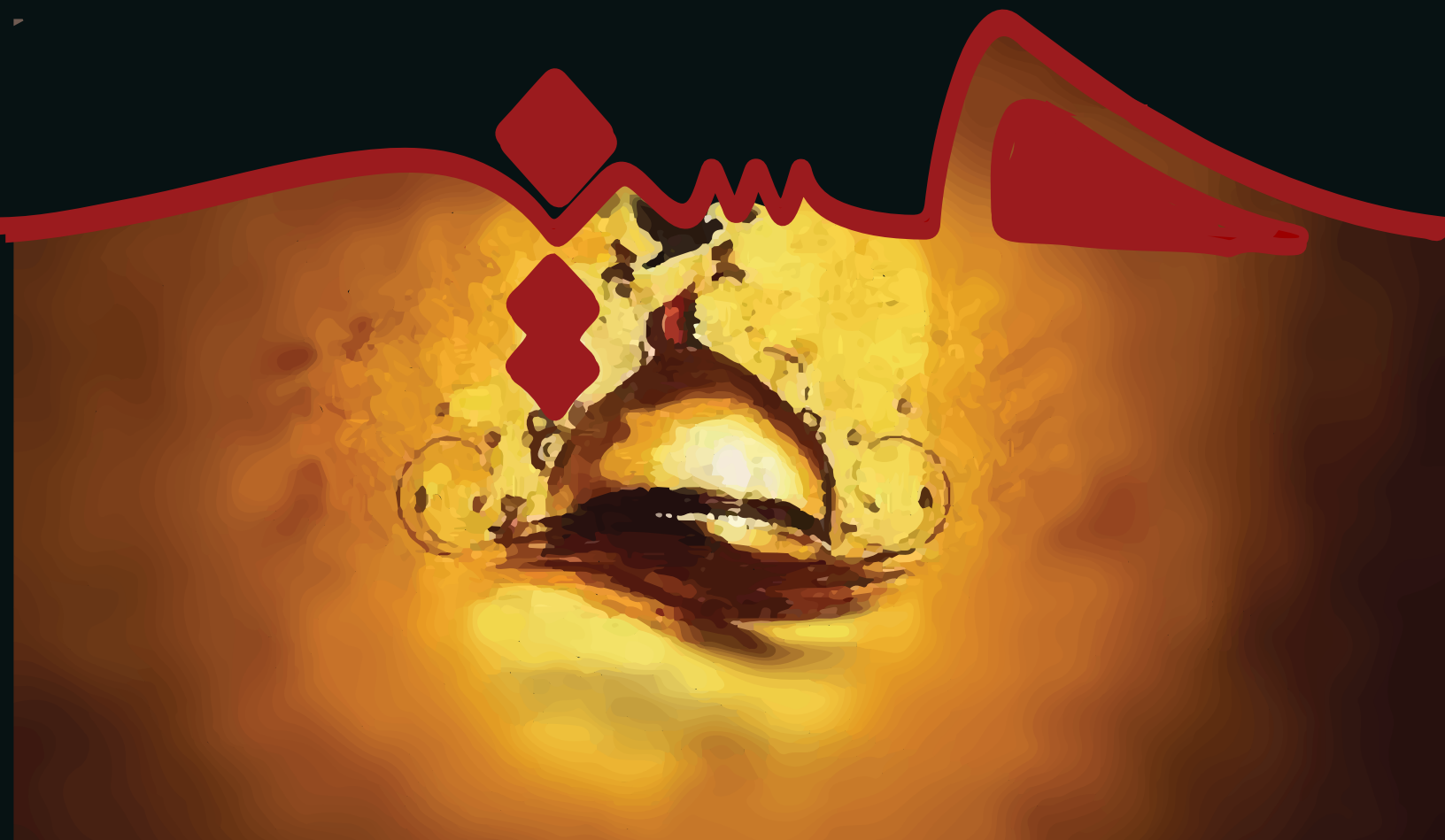
AL-KISA FOUNDATION

UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

Muharram Project Booklet

MUHARRAM 1440 | 2018



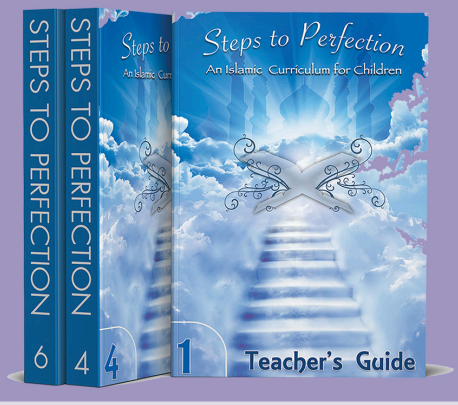
AL-KISA FOUNDATION

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

THE GUIDING LIGHT
A collection of Quranic Verses and Sayings from the 14 Ma'soomeen
Kisa Kids Publications
ALLAH LOVES YOU
BLESSED NAMES
The Secrets Behind the Names of the 14 Ma'soomeen
ANIMALS IN THE QURAN
Kisa Kids Publications
THE LITTLE GENERAL
Prophet Muhammad (S)
Written By:
Kisa Kids Publications

ISLAMIC PROJECTS

ISLAMIC CURRICULUM



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KISA KIDS

Letter from Maulana Nabi Raza Abidi

Salāmun ʿAlaykum,
May Allāh bless us, our families, and our communities.

Our sincerest condolences to the Imām of our time, Imām Mahdī (aj), our great Marājiʿ and scholars, the Muslim Ummah, and all the believers on the upcoming commemoration of Imām Ḥusayn's (a) shahādah.

Dear brothers and sisters, our children are our hope and future, and we need to invest in our children the same way Imām Ḥusayn (a) did. Imām Ḥusayn (a) taught and raised his children in such a way that they dedicated their entire lives and even sacrificed them for Allāh. From the tiny infant ʿAlī al-Asghar to the young teenagers like Qāsim to the youthful leaders like ʿAlī al-Akbar. As Imām Khomeini has mentioned, the months of Muḥarram and Ṣafar are the best time to learn about more about Islam and manifest the message of Islam and Imām Ḥusayn (a) in our daily lives. It is a great time and opportunity to come to the masjid, attend majālis, express our love for the Ahl al-Bayt (a), and learn from our scholars.

Imām ʿAlī (a) has said, "Children have treasures buried deep within them." It is clear that the roots of Islam and servitude are embedded in each child, and it is incumbent upon us to take hold of these roots and cultivate them.

For this reason, in Muḥarram 2013, we piloted a structured children's program at SABA, which consisted of a speech and simple crafts. Alḥamdulillāh, the program was a success, so the following year, we took it to the next level by creating projects centered around the main themes of Muḥarram.
After the success of the children's Muḥarram program, we expanded it to Shahr Ramaḍān, Thursday nights, and every other main program in the masjid (e.g., wilādāt, shahādāt, etc.). When we saw that the children were benefitting tremendously, we began sending the lesson plans out to different centers and received positive feedback, Alḥamdulillāh.

In 2016, with the tawfīq of Allāh, we launched Kisa Kids (www.kisakids.org), which focuses on providing Islamic curricula, Islamic literature, and Islamic project resources for children. We also piloted the Muḥarram Project Collective and received great feedback. For this upcoming Muḥarram 2018/1440, we are happy to launch the third annual Muḥarram Project Collective. The kits in this package include 11 speeches and lesson plans that have been put together in collaboration with scholars and educators, as well as project supplies for the activities. We must help our children nurture their Islamic identities and become ambassadors in this part of the world — and the first place this starts from is the family and Masjid.

Let us take advantage of the upcoming ten days and work towards building a spiritually healthy family and community. This family, the Ahl al-Bayt (a), are not just our role models; they are also our rescue boats, and Imām Ḥusayn's (a) boat is the fastest.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (a) has said, "Certainly, Ḥusayn (a) is the lantern of guidance and ark of salvation (boat of rescue)."
He was asked, "Aren't you all [the Imāms] the ark of salvation?"
The Imām (a) replied, "Yes we are all the ark of salvation, but certainly, the boat of Ḥusayn (a) is larger and faster."

Inshāʾ Allāh as we board the boat of Imām Ḥusayn (a) this Muḥarram, we can rid ourselves of all impurities and help make our families strong, healthy, nurturing families.

Pray for the Muslim Ummah, and bring awareness to your children so they can prepare for the ẓuhūr of Imām al-Mahdī (aj). Talk to them about everything that is happening in the world, especially to our Muslim brothers and sisters and the children who are being oppressed all around the world in Burma, Yemen, Syria, Kashmir, Palestine, Bahrain, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and everywhere else.

Our humble request is to create a two-way connection by all of us sharing our expertise and experiences and avoiding duplicated work, in order to maximize our potential. Please share your ideas, experiences, and successes with us, so that together, we can all move forward and build a global network, Inshāʾ Allāh

We pray that Allāh gives us the tawfīq to actualize our duties and responsibilities.

With Duʿās
Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

AL-KISA FOUNDATION

UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

Muharram Project Kit Tutorial

Salaamun Alaykum,

May Allah bless you, your family, and your community, inshaAllah. We pray that He accepts all of our efforts in trying to instill in our children the love of the Ahlul Bayt (A) and the message of Karbala.

Inshallah this Muharram kit is a small step towards our children embodying the characteristics of the Ahlul Bayt (A) and developing a relationship with Aba Abdillah al-Husayn (A).

This booklet contains the following:

- 11 project lesson plans
- 11 speeches with museebah
- General guidelines for speeches

The activities and speeches have been divided by day and correlate with each other.

In the kit, you will also find that each box/bag is labeled according to the day. We have tried our best to include all the supplies you will need for the project of the day. However, we request that you purchase enough of the following supplies, based on how many children you have:

- Markers
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

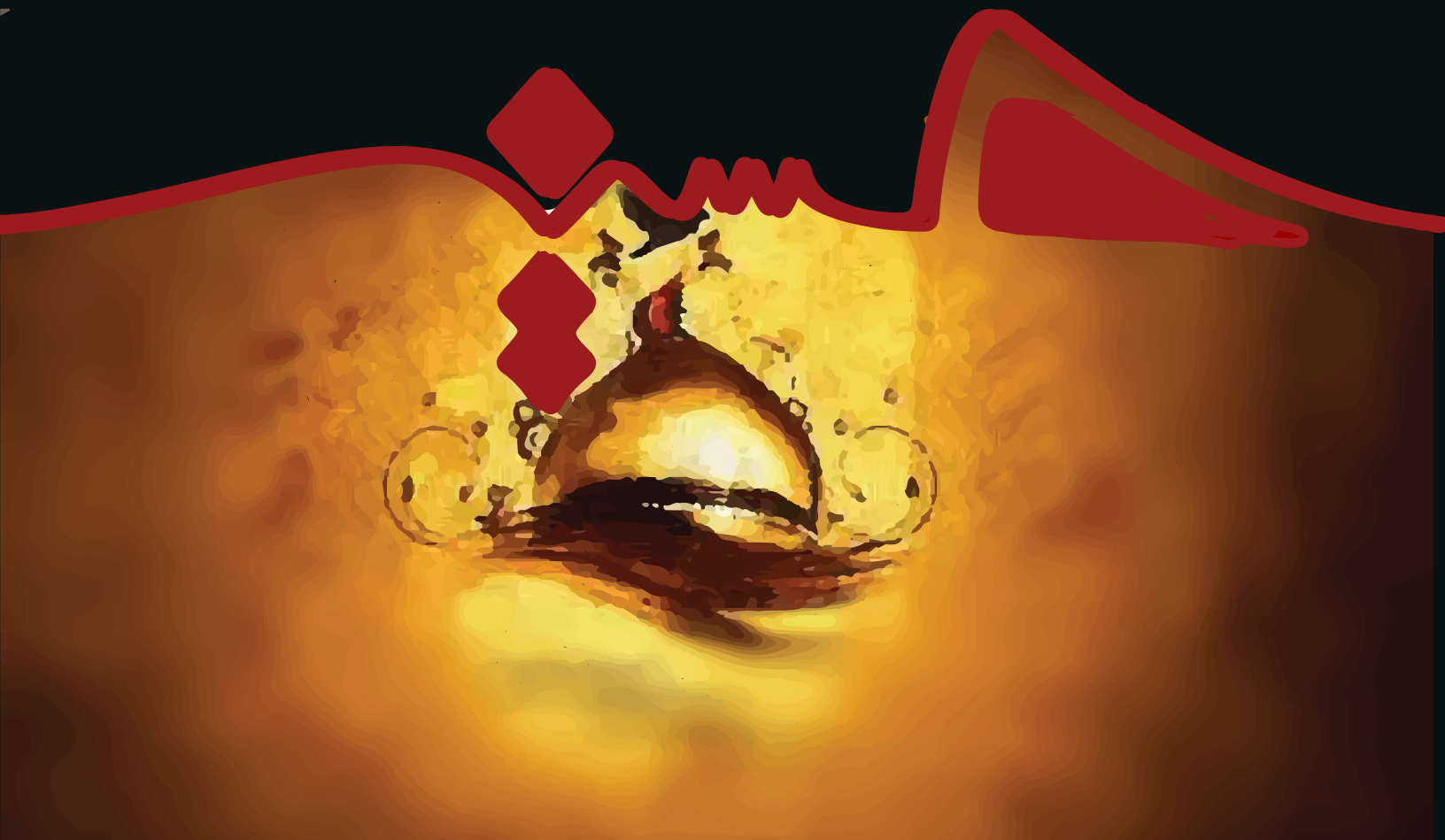
We suggest that you look over the project for each day ahead of time and attempt to create a sample project, so that children have a point of reference.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at info@kisakids.org. We would love to hear any suggestions, feedback, comments, etc. Please also send us any pictures you take.

May Allah (SWT) grant us all the shafa'ah of Imam Husayn (A) on the Day of Judgment and allow us to uphold his message.

With Du'as,
Kisa Kids Publications

LESSON PLANS



Project #1: Good Deeds Treasure Box

Objective: Children will learn who takes care of their good deeds during their life and will create a treasure box to help them remember that their good deeds are saved.

Time: 30 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- White Favor Boxes (http://www.orientaltrading.com/white-favor-boxes-a2-3_3602.fltr?parentSkuName=treat-boxes&parentSku=13601614&keyword=white%20box)
- Sharpies/markers
- 5-6 pieces of writing, printing, or notepad paper (not provided)

Procedure:

1. SAY: Salaamun alaikum, everyone. Tonight is the first night of Muharram. During the nights of Muharram we learn how to be good Muslims while remembering Imam Husayn (a) and the events of Karbala. What are some good lessons we can remember during Muharram?
2. SAY: Many good responses. There are many good lessons we learn during Muharram. We can use those lessons to teach us when and how to do good deeds. Who is it that saves our good deeds?
3. SAY: Yes, it is Allah who saves our good deeds. InshaAllah, all of the good deeds that we carry out will help us grow closer to Allah and to the Imam (AJ) of our time. Today we will make a special treasure box to help us remember our good deeds.
4. At this time hand out the white favor boxes and the sharpies.
5. Children decorate their boxes as well as write their duas and their goals for being good Muslims
6. Next help them assemble their boxes so they are ready for use.
7. Provide the children with the paper and have them write different good deeds that they can do or have done. Then have them put these papers into their box.
8. Explain to the children that they can save their boxes and add more good deeds to inspire them to continue doing good deeds, InshaAllah. Also, explain that they can go back and read their good deeds whenever they need encouragement.

Project #2: Making Good Choices

Objective: Children will learn that they have to work hard to build their Jannah and protect themselves bad choices and Shaytaan by actively working to make good choices.

Time: 30 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- Poinsettia Ornament Craft Kit (http://www.orientaltrading.com/poinsettia-ornament-craft-kit-a2-13669090.fltr?keyword=craft+kit)
- Self-Adhesive Bees (http://www.orientaltrading.com/self-adhesive-bees-a2-13764548.fltr?keyword=bee&filter=Craft--Hobby-Supplies)
- Sharpie

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaamun alaikum, everyone. If you woke up one morning and wanted to go out on a trip with your family, what would you have to do? Would you be able to magically get there straight from your bed?
2. **SAY:** Of course not. We would have to make preparations and get everything ready to go so we could reach our destination, right? So what about when it comes to going to Jannah? Can we get there magically by just wishing for it?
3. **SAY:** Right. We have to work hard and prepare ourselves. We have to build our Jannah. What do we have to do to build our Jannah and have a good akhira?
4. **SAY:** Great responses. We build our Jannah by working hard to make good choices. It takes a lot of knowledge and effort to make sure we are doing the right thing. Who tries to trick us into doing the wrong thing?
5. **SAY:** Yes, Shaytaan. One of of Shaytaan's tricks is that he tries to make our bad deeds look good in our eyes, so we have to work hard to protect our minds and hearts from his tricks. We have to try our best to make the right choices with ourselves, our families, friends, and community. InshaAllah we will be making a beautiful flower with a busy bee to remind us that building a beautiful Jannah takes hard work.
6. At this time hand out the poinsettia pieces. Help the children to assemble their flowers
7. Then hand out one bee to each child. Help them stick their bee onto the flower.

Project #3: Ambassador Torch

Objective: Children will learn that knowing right and wrong means that they can be the ambassadors of Islam and have the power to make a difference.

Time: 30 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- Torch Tissue Paper Craft Kit (http://www.orientaltrading.com/torch-tissue-paper-craft-kit-a2-13729623.fltr?keyword=kit&filter=CardboardlCardstocklFeltlCanvaslCrafts-for-Kids)
- Sharpie markers

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaam alaikum, everyone. Tonight is the night we remember two followers of Imam Husayn (a): Muslim ibn Awsaja and Habib ibn Mazahir. Now those were the helpers of Imam Husayn (a), but who are the helpers of Imam Mahdi (AJ)?
2. **SAY:** Yes! MashaAllah. *We* are the helpers and followers of Imam Mahdi (AJ). During Imam Husayn's (a) time it was the responsibility of his followers like Muslim ibn Awsaja and Habib ibn Mazahir to help him fight the oppressors. What are some of our responsibilities today as followers of Imam Mahdi (AJ)?
3. **SAY:** MashaAllah, great responses from all of you. We all have many different responsibilities: for example, taking care of our parents, being considerate to our neighbors, or teaching the uneducated. We all have responsibilities towards others as well as ourselves. When we carry out these responsibilities what are we representing?
4. **SAY:** We are representing Islam. So we must try and act in the best way so that we can show both Muslims and non-Muslims what Islam truly is. We are ambassadors of Islam, and when we act responsibly we are representing the true message. Today we will be making a special ambassador's torch to help us continue this work as good Muslims, inshaAllah.
5. At this time hand out the Torch Tissue Paper Craft Kit to each child. Assist the children in assembling their torches
6. Finally with Sharpie they can write "I am an ambassador of Islam" or any other messages that help them feel like they can make a difference and represent the true path.

Project #4: Frame of Truth

Objective: Children will learn about the importance of making Allah and the true path the frame of their life.

Time: 30 minutes

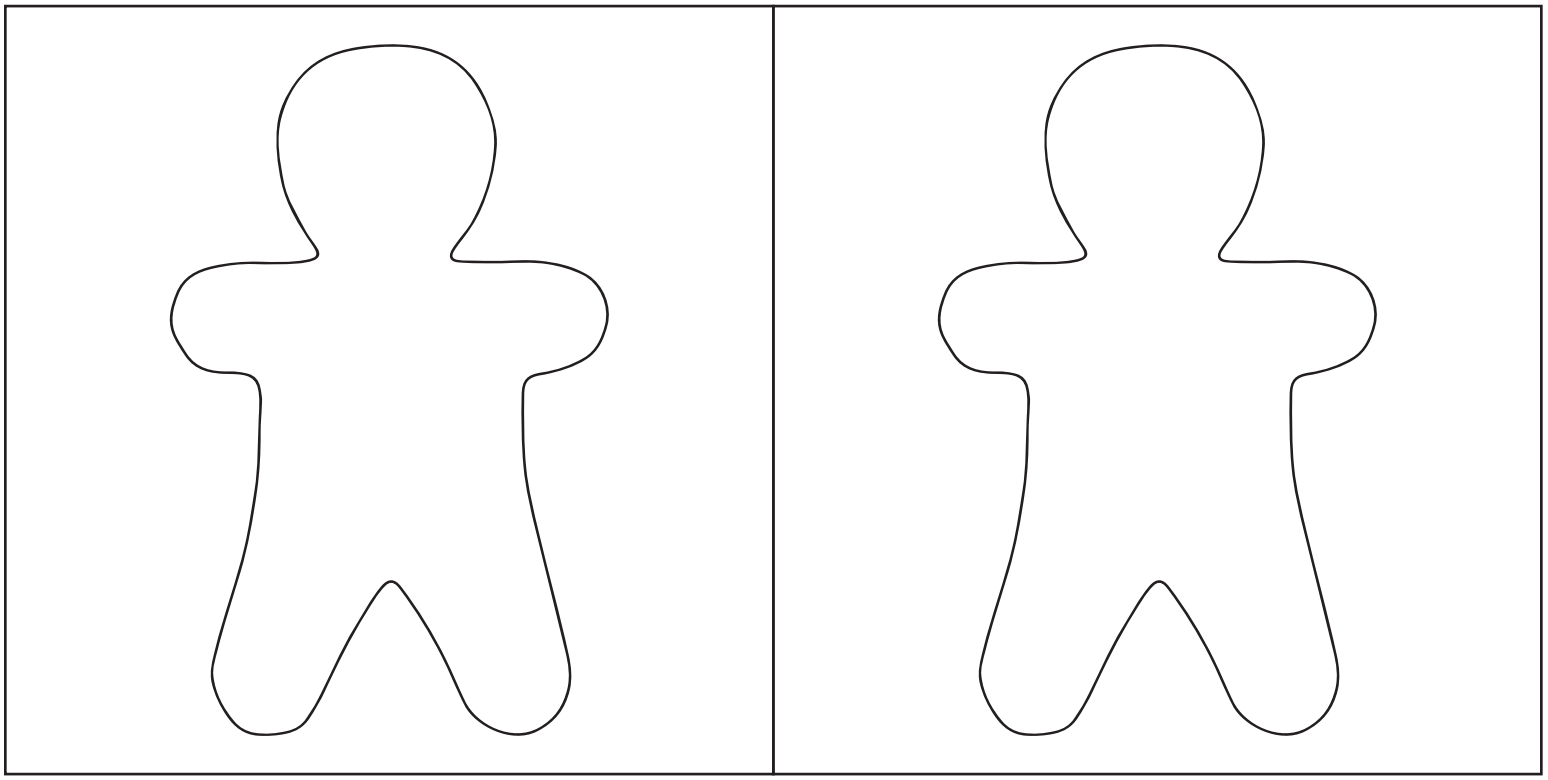
Suggested Ages: 5+

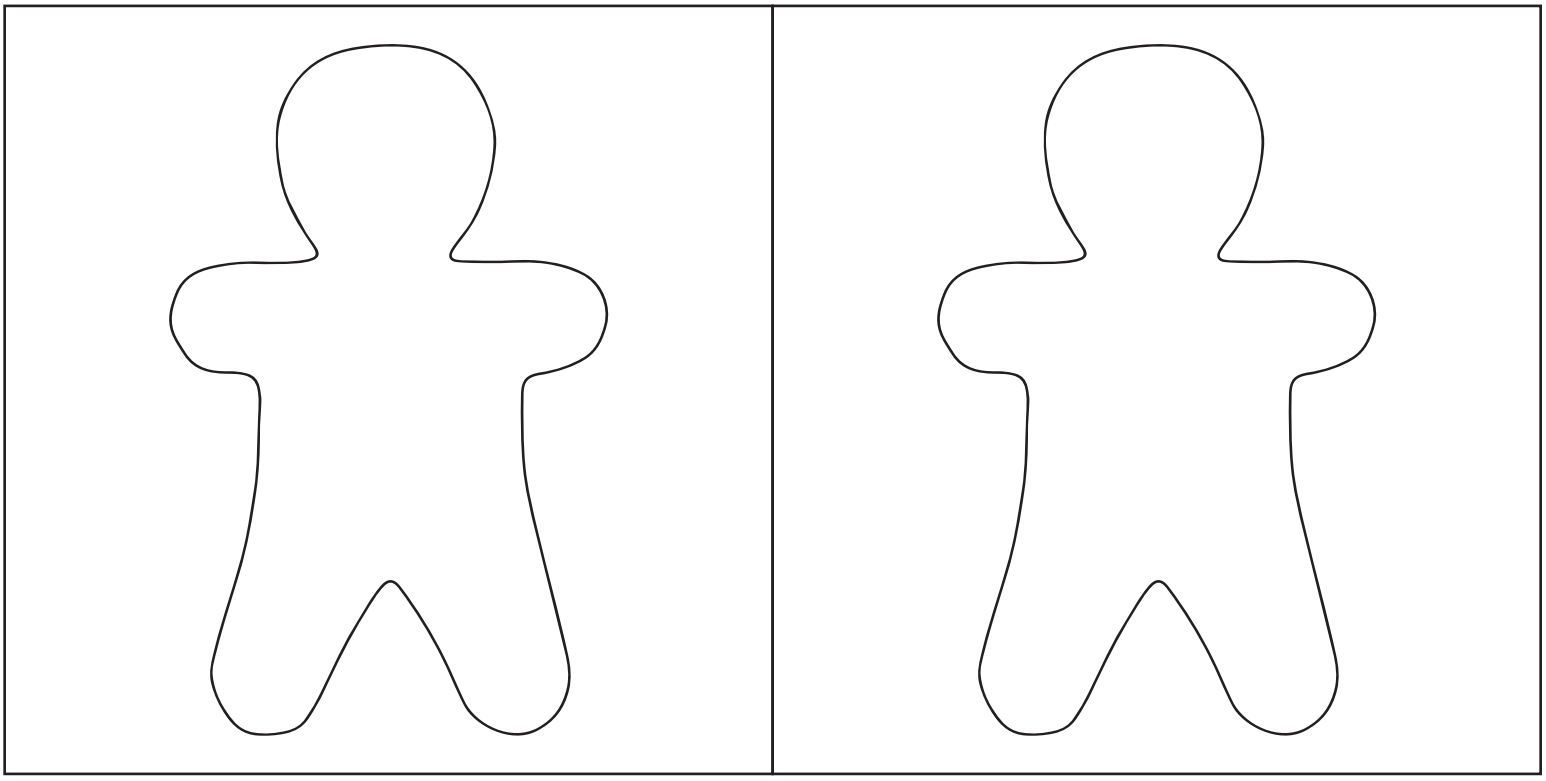
Materials:

- DIY unfinished wood square frames (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-unfinished-wood-square-frames-a2-13674891.fltr?keyword=diy)
- Basic Body Shape template
- Sharpie markers

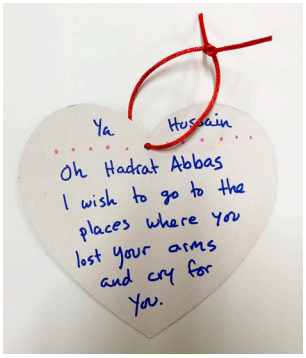
Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaam alaikum, everyone. Many people come and go from our lives. But there is One who is with as forever. Who is that?
2. **SAY:** Yes, Allah is with us for our entire lives. He never changes and He is always there for us. What are some things Allah does for us?
3. **SAY:** Many great responses. Allah gives us food. He keeps us safe. He guides us in our life. If Allah is always with us then should we always be with Allah?
4. **SAY:** Yes! We should make Allah's path and His rules the basis for our lives. We should always remember that Allah is watching us. We should keep a strong relationship with Allah. Today we will be making a special project to help us remember to frame our whole lives with Allah's presence and His true path.
5. At this time hand out the thick white paper. This is the paper that will go inside the frames. Have the children write on these papers the things they do to be good Muslims and things they want to do to be better Muslims
6. Now hand out the DIY wood frames. Have the children write on their frames different rules and expectations that Allah has for all of us. This can include salaah, hajj, respecting parents, maintaining good hygiene, talking to Allah, being honest, etc.
7. Now hand out the basic body shape template. Have the children decorate the body shape to represent themselves.
8. Then have them write different skills and abilities they have that will help them succeed in life within the frame of Allah's doctrine.
9. Finally have them cut out their picture and assist them in inserting their pictures in their frame.





Project #5: Karbala Heart



Objective: Children will learn more about the amazing effects that Karbala and the season of Muharram can have on the hearts of the people.

Time: 40 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

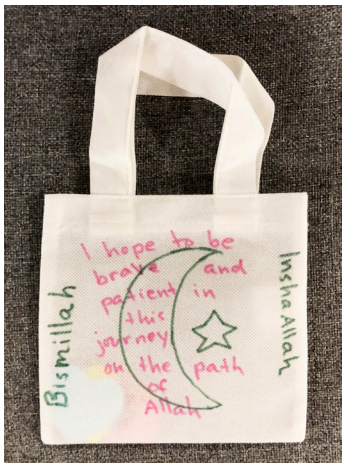
Materials:

- Magic Color Scratch Hearts (http://www.orientaltrading.com/magic-color-scratch-hearts-a2-48_4245.fltr?keyword=heart&filter=Craft--Hobby-Supplies)
- Sharpie markers

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaam alaikum, everyone. Today we are going to be talking about how Karbala affects us. Who can tell me where Karbala is located?
2. **SAY:** Yes, Karbala is located in Iraq. How many of you have been to Karbala for ziyaarat?
3. **SAY:** Going to Karbala is very special and it changes people. But we can feel the effects of Karbala even without going there. How can we be affected by Karbala without going there?
4. **SAY:** Imam Husayn's (a) sacrifice and knowing what happened in Karbala is something that can shake people emotionally and motivate them to be better people. It can make us more aware of our place in this world. What is a very big part of our tradition during Muharram?
5. **SAY:** A big part of our tradition during Muharram is that we have lectures at the masjid, in community centers, and even in our homes where we learn how to be good Muslims. How many of you have ever felt inspired or more aware of your role as a Muslim just from listening to one good lecture by our aalims?
6. **SAY:** This is another way Karbala affects us. We learn these lessons and we see how Karbala is connected to these lessons. And we learn how we can be connected to the Ahlul Bayt, to Allah, and to our brothers and sisters in Islam. This way our hearts are affected every year by Karbala. Today we will make special hearts to help us remember.
7. At this time hand out the Magic Color Scratch Hearts to each child.
8. Each child should scratch out a design or message that reflects how Karbala has affected them
9. On the back of the heart have the children write a message to a shaheed of their choosing expressing their sadness, gratitude, and/or love.
10. Finally have them tie the string onto their hearts

Project #6: Followers Travel Bag



Objective: Children will learn about the characteristics of a strong believer and follower of the Ahlul Bayt.

Time: 40 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- DIY mini tote bags (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-mini-tote-bags-a2-13632569.fltr?keyword=diy+bag)
- 6 Colorful heart-shaped gift tags per child (https://www.amazon.com/Zicome-Colorful-Natural-Shaped-Bright/dp/B01IT1BEEC/ref=sr_1_9?ie=UTF8&qid=1531185967&sr=8-9&keywords=heart+shape+paper&dpID=51vGZQENb3L&preST=_SY300_QL70_&dpSrc=srch)
- Sharpie Markers

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaam alaikum, everyone. What are the qualities of a true believer and follower of the Ahlul Bayt?
2. **SAY:** Many great reponses. We have a special hadith from Imam Ridha (a) in which he tells us that the qualities of a true believer and follower are: to keep your secrets, be kind to people, and have patience at all times. Keep, be, and have are all verbs. What is a verb?
3. **SAY:** A verb is any word that describes action. If these three qualities of a good follower of Ahlul Bayt are described with verbs what does that mean for us?
4. **SAY:** We have to act on all of the things that Allah and the Ahlul Bayt have taught us. If being a Muslim and a true believe requires action what makes a believer of the Ahlul Bayt a true believer and follower? Is it enough just to love them in our hearts?
5. **SAY:** Good responses. We have another hadith from Imam Ridha (a) in which he tells us that “the best of you are those who love the Ahlul Bayt, believe in the message, and follow the Ahlul Bayt” with your actions and behavior. Where are we following the Ahlul Bayt to? What is the direction of our journey?
6. **SAY:** Yes! We are all working to be closer to Allah and to be the best of His creations here in the dunya and the next world. InshaAllah we will make a special travel bag today to help us follow the Ahlul Bayt on this journey towards Allah.
7. At this time hand out the heart-shaped gift tags. Have the children decorate these on one side and write the qualities and characteristics of a true believer as mentioned in the discussion. There should be one quality or characteristic per heart for a total of six points. These are the travel tools that they can use to have a successful life.
8. Next handout the DIY tote bags. Have the children decorate these bags. Have them write on the bags their thoughts and feelings on being a true follower of Ahlul Bayt.
9. Finally have the children put their travel tools hearts into their tote bags to be ready to continue their journey with Ahlul Bayt, inshaAllah.

Project #7: Wings of Connection

Objective: Children will learn about the power of connecting to the Imam (AJ) of our time and that he is our best friend.

Time: 40 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

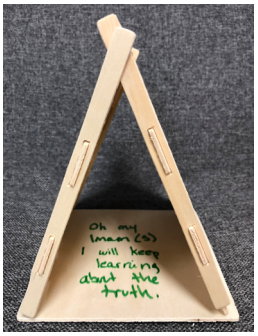
Materials:

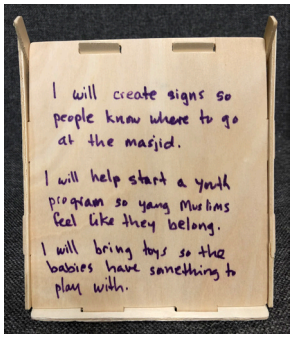
- Tissue Paper Butterfly Craft Kit (http://www.orientaltrading.com/tissue-paper-butterfly-craft-kit-a2-48_5790.fltr?keyword=butterfly&filter=Crafts-for-Kids)
- Glue
- Sharpie markers

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaamun alaikum, everyone. How many of you wish that you can be with the Imam (AJ) of our time?
2. **SAY:** MashaAllah. We all try to find a way to connect to the Imam (AJ) of our time, to our Ahlul Bayt, and to Allah. How many of you wish that you could fly? Or have a special power to do special things?
3. **SAY:** Many times when we are struggling with a problem or when we are so worried about something that we can't sleep we find ourselves wishing we had some kind of power to help us or that we could fly away. But who can fly to us? Who has the power to help us?
4. **SAY:** Yes, Allah can help us. And so can the Imam (AJ) of our time. He can be in so many places at the same time and help so many people everyday. He knows our thoughts and our prayers and wishes. So if Imam (AJ) can come to us, do we want to also go to him and have a connection to him?
5. **SAY:** Yes! Imam (AJ) can be our best friend and we can be his best followers InshaAllah. We can make ourselves such good Muslims, InshaAllah that our hearts can fly to be with Imam (AJ) and we can feel safe and strong knowing our Imam (AJ) is always nearby. How many of us will try to be the best friend to the Imam (AJ) of our time?
6. **SAY:** MashaAllah! Today we will make a beautiful butterfly to remind us that our hearts can fly to our Imam (AJ) and that Imam (AJ) can come to us whenever we need him, InshaAllah.
7. At this time hand out the Tissue Paper Butterfly Craft Kit to each child. Assist the children in assembling their butterflies.
8. Finally with Sharpie have them write "Adrikni (help us) Ya Mahdi (AJ)" or any other messages that they want to send to Imam (AJ).

Project #8: Community Tent




I will create signs so people know where to go at the masjid.
I will help start a youth program so young Muslims feel like they belong.
I will bring toys so the babies have something to play with.

Objective: Children will learn the importance of community and that being with and loving those who follow the Ahlul Bayt is a way to be near the Imam (AJ) of our time.

Time: 40 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- DIY Unfinished Wood Tents* (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-unfinished-wood-tents-a2-13802695.fltr?keyword=diyhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH8Ggd5vwds)
- Sharpie

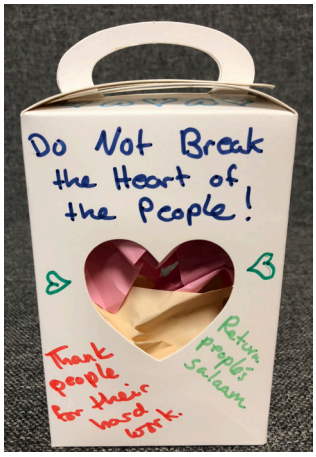
Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaamun alaikum, everyone. If you really enjoy a sport, let's say soccer, what kind of people would you hang out with?
2. **SAY:** Most likely you would hang out with other kids who enjoy soccer and you would play soccer together, right? So if we love the Ahlul Bayt what kind of people can help us have more love for the Ahlul Bayt and to follow them?
3. **SAY:** Yes! We need to be around other people who love and follow the Ahlul Bayt. These are our brothers and sisters in Islam that we see and work with in the masjid and community. What is the general atmosphere that we should have in our communities?
4. **SAY:** Great responses. We should have love for our brothers and sisters in Islam. We should have love for those who love the Ahlul Bayt. When you love the people and are with the people that is your way of being with the Imam (AJ). How many of us want to be with our Imam (AJ)?
5. **SAY:** MashaAllah! Today we will make a special project to help us remember the importance of having love for and being with those who love the Ahlul Bayt. This project will help you remember how to be with the Imam (AJ) InshaAllah, even though we cannot see him.
6. At this time hand out the DIY Unfinished Wood Tents. Assist the children in assembling the tents.
7. Next, have the children write on one side of the tent different ways they can be part of their community
8. On the other side of the tent have the children write how they can improve their communities to be better (cleaner, kinder, more educated etc.)
9. Lastly on the inside floor of the tent have the children write something to express their commitment to our Imam (AJ).**

*NOTE: It is easiest to first lock the walls together and then add the floor to the bottom.

**NOTE: They can remove the walls to write on the floor of the tent

Project #9: The Hearts of the People



Objective: Children will learn the importance of kindness and humility, and that they should not hurt people's feelings.

Time: 40 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:
Wedding Boxes with Heart Cutout (http://www.orientaltrading.com/wedding-boxes-with-heart-cutout-a2-13697617.fltr)
5-6 pieces of writing, printing, or notepad paper (not provided)
Sharpies

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaamun alaikum, everyone. How do you feel when someone is mean to you or hurts your feelings?
2. **SAY:** Yes, it is very hurtful. We feels sad and upset. What are some ways that we become careless with other people's feelings?
3. **SAY:** There are many little things that make a big difference between hurting someone's feelings or not hurting their feelings. Being unkind is more than just yelling at someone or pushing them. What are some ways we might say the right thing but not in the right way?
4. **SAY:** Many great responses. One example is that you may see that someone is praying incorrectly. If you yell at them or make fun of them for that then it is unkind and bad akhlaq! So what is a better way of helping someone who is making a mistake in salat or anything else?
5. **SAY:** Good! It is better to tell them gently and in private. And to show them the correct way, inshaAllah. Now if someone is stronger or smarter that others or if they have a higher status do they get to be mean or rude? Is it okay for them to yell at people or make fun of them?
6. **SAY:** Right! No matter who you are you cannot hurt people's feelings. You especially cannot hurt the feelings of your fellow brothers and sisters in Islam. As Imam Musa Kadhim (a) said to Ali bin Yaqtin: "You cannot break the heart of the people." What are ways that we can be more careful and considerate with others?
7. **SAY:** MashaAllah, you already know how to take care of the hearts of the people and to be loving and kind. Today we will make a special project to help us remember how to always be kind and do the right thing.
8. At this time hand out the Wedding Boxes with Heart Cutout. Assist the children in assembling their boxes.
9. Next have the children write on the boxes: Do Not Break the Heart of the People.
10. Have them write on the boxes different ways to be kind, considerate, and loving to others.
11. Now hand out the notepaper. Have the children write on them different things that might hurt others feelings.
12. Then have them crumple each piece of paper and put them in the box and close their boxes.

Project #10: Master of the Martyrs

Objective: Children will learn that the events of Karbala were just the beginning of Imam Husayn's (a) mission and that it is part of our purpose to continue the mission.

Time: 40 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- DIY Crowns* (http://www.orientaltrading.com/diy-crowns-48-pcs-a2-48_8331.fltr?categoryId=550175)
- Sharpie markers
- Stapler or tape (note provided)**

Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaamun alaikum, everyone. Tonight is the eve of Ashura, the most tragic day in all of history. Imam Husayn (a) and his companions will all be shaheed by the end of the day, tomorrow. Imam Zainul Abideen (a), Hadhrat Zainab and the women and children will be alone surrounded by the enemy. On this night Imam Husayn (a) and his companions are alone surrounded by the enemy preparing for the difficulties ahead. They know that soon they will all be shaheed as they sit together without anyone to help them. My dear children, when we feel alone which people can you turn to for help?
2. **SAY:** You can turn to your family and friends. But the camp of Imam Husayn (a) had no one to help them. Imam Husayn (a) and his companions had no one to help them except each other. What was Imam Husayn's (a) call to the Shia of all time before he was shaheed?
3. **SAY:** Our dear Imam Husayn (a) called to us through the ages of history saying: "Hal Min Nasirin Yansurna." "Is there anyone to help me?" My dear children when Imam Hussain (A) was shaheed it was not the end of the mission. It was not the end of his call for help. The mission had only just begun and Hadhrat Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (a) had to continue that mission. And we can still answer Imam Husayn's (a) call. My dear children, will we run to the aid of Imam Husayn (a) in the way we live our lives today?
4. **SAY:** Will we run to the aid of Imam Husayn (a) by helping others and being kind and honest?
5. **SAY:** Will we answer the call of our dear Imam Husayn (a) by being kind to our parents and brothers and sisters?
6. **SAY:** Will we answer the call of Imam Husayn (a) by maintaining our prayers and other Islamic practices?
7. **SAY:** MashaAllah. My dear children, today we will make a special project to remember Imam Husayn (a) and our part in continuing his mission in following the true path, InshaAllah.
8. At this time hand out the DIY Crowns. Assist the children in assembling their crowns
9. Have them write "Labbaik Ya Hussain (A)" and "Syed us Shuhada" on the crown and add any other words of remembrance and commitment to the mission of Imam Hussain (a).

*NOTE: Each strip of unmade crowns is two different designs of crowns interlocked together. Separate them and distribute one crown per child.

**NOTE: The crowns may not fasten very well by the tab in the crown and may require a stapler or tape to be secured in a crown shape.

Project #11: A Mourning World

Objective: Children will take the time to remember the events of Karbala and how they continue to resonate throughout the world today.

Time: 35 minutes

Suggested Ages: 5+

Materials:

- Color Your Own 3D Globe*^ (http://www.orientaltrading.com/color-your-own-3d-globes-a2-13786772.fltr?categoryId=550175)
- Sharpie markers

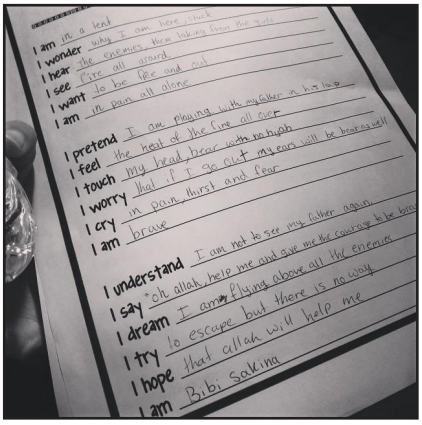
Procedure:

1. **SAY:** Salaamun alaikum, everyone. Today is a very sad and difficult day for the lovers of Ahlul Bayt. People all over the world are mourning Imam Hussain (A) and commemorating the events of Karbala. Who can tell me some places we can find the lovers of Imam Husayn (a) and the Ahlul Bayt?
2. **SAY:** We can find those commemorating Imam Husayn (a) in all of the inhabited continents of the world. This is the power of Karbala after so many years. We are still crying for Imam Hussain (a) and the events of Karbala. How many of us wish to go to Karbala to say salaam to Imam Hussain (a)?
3. **SAY:** MashaAllah, everybody here loves Imam Hussain (a) and all those who sacrificed themselves on the plains of Karbala. Many of us live so far away from Karbala and yet our hearts are so near to that holy place. What are ways that we keep Karbala so near to our hearts?
4. **SAY:** MashaAllah. We keep Karbala close to our hearts when we drink water and remember Imam Hussain (a). We keep Karbala close to our hearts when we give water to others. We keep Karbala close to our hearts when we come to the masjid and learn how to be good Muslims. Today we will make a special project to help us so that Karbala is never too far away, InshaAllah.
5. At this time hand out the 3D Globes. Assist the children in assembling their globes.
6. Next assist the children in finding roughly the location of Karbala on the globe
7. Then they can mark roughly their own location on the globe
8. Finally they can write on the base of the globe: “Karbala is near to my heart” and/or any other messages of commemoration such as “Labbaik Ya Husayn (a)” etc.

*NOTE: Be advised that each globe has four different globe faces: one for each side of the globe. Make sure each child receives all four distinct faces.

* NOTE: The base of the globe consists of two pieces. One piece has a slit running from the top of the globe down to the center and the other piece has a slit running from the base of the globe up to the center.

“I Am” Poem


I am in a tent
I wonder why I am here, crying
I hear the enemies men taking from the girls
I see fire all around
I want to be free and out
I am in pain all alone
I pretend I am playing with my father in his lap
I feel the heat of the fire all over
I touch my head, bear with me bibi
I worry that if I go out my ears will be beaten with
I cry in pain, thirst and fear
I am brave
I understand I am not to see my father again
I say "oh allah, help me and give me the courage to be brave
I dream I am flying above all the enemies
I try to escape but there is no way
I hope that allah will help me
I am Bibi Sakina

Objective: Students will learn about the events of Ashura Night, Shaam-e-Ghareeban, and express their emotions in a moving poem.

Suggested Ages: 6+

Time: 30 Minutes

Materials:

- “I Am” Poem templates
- Nainawa Soundtrack (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0S_9nV0m9sU)
- Pens/pencils

Procedure:

1. On the night of Shaam-e-Ghareebaan, narrate the tragic events of the evening to the children, with the Nainawa soundtrack playing in the background.
2. Describe the tragedies that the family of Imam Husayn (a) went through - Sayyidah Zaynab (a), Sayyidah Sakina (a), Imam as-Sajjad (a), and the others.
3. Ask students to write “I Am” poems from the perspective of someone who was present in karbala - real or fictitious.

I am poem

I am _____

I wonder _____

I hear _____

I see _____

I want _____

I am _____

I pretend _____

I feel _____

I touch _____

I worry _____

I cry _____

I am _____

I understand _____

I say _____

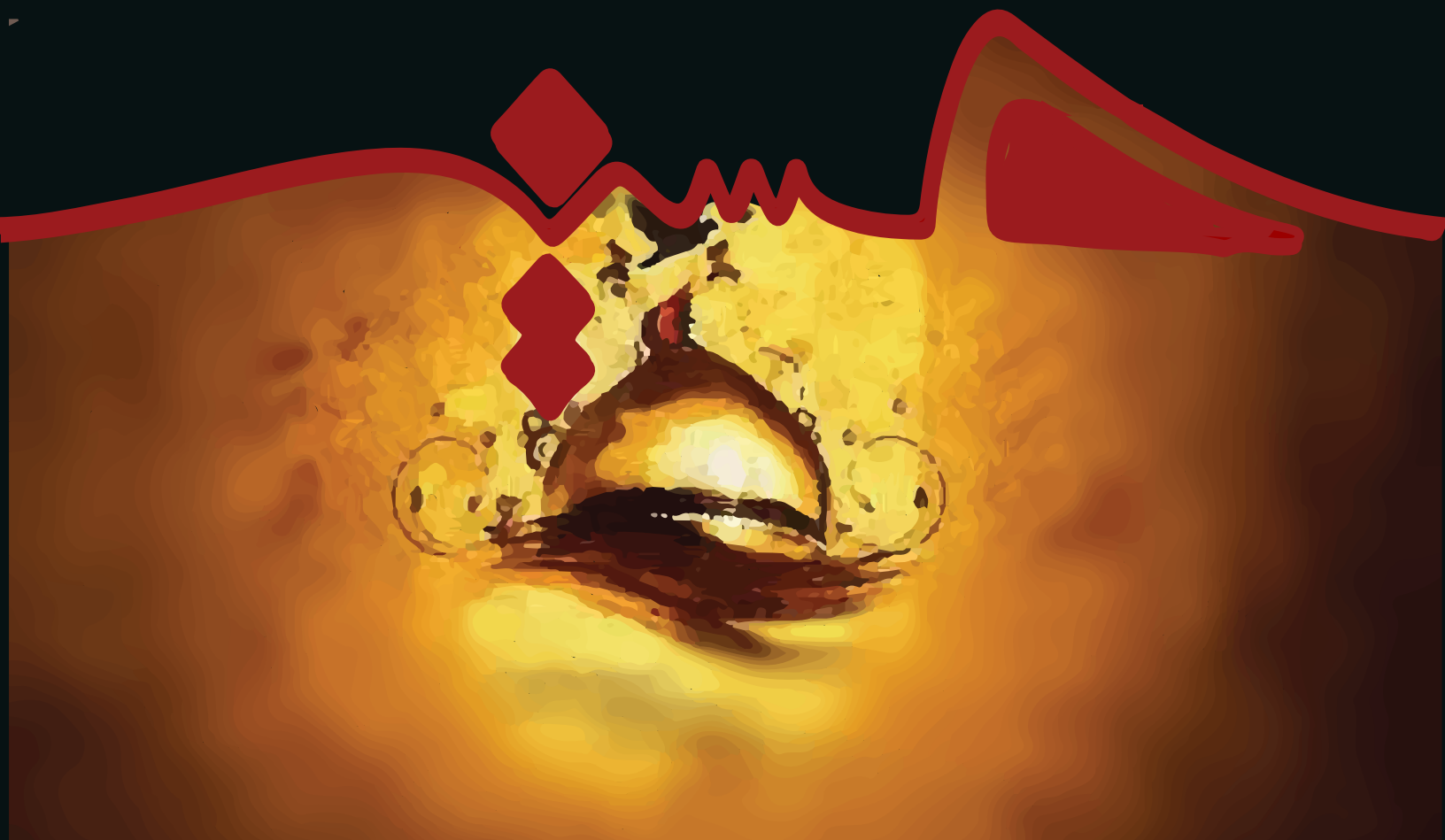
I dream _____

I try _____

I hope _____

I am _____

SPEECHES



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
اللهم صلى على محمد و آل محمد و عجل فرجهم
السلام عليك يا ابا عبد الله الحسين عليه السلام

General Guidelines

Speech Structure:

Start with Du'a of Imam Mahdi (AJ) (Dua al-Faraj)

Main speech

Museebah: It's nice to turn off the lights and turn on a few lamps.

Recite the Salaam to Imam Husayn (A):

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Children usually repeat the last 4 lines
We usually recite the last 4 lines 3 times and dedicate them:
in hopes of manifesting the qualities we learnt about
for our parents
for the Imam (AJ) of the time

Recite the museebah

End with a few du'as
"O' Allah, please protect our *ulema* (scholars) and parents" (Say Ilaahi Ameen and encourage kids to repeat, so it slowly becomes a habit)
"O' Allah, please give us the strength to always make good choices" (Ilaahi Ameen)
"O' Allah, please help us to become the close friends and helpers of Imam Mahdi (AJ)" (Ilaahi Ameen)
"O' Allah, please protect all the children around the world and give them food and shelter" (Ilaahi Ameen)
"O' Allah please hasten the reappearance of the Imam so we can finally live as good Muslims in a safe world" (Ilaahi Ameen)

Speech #1: The Islamic New Year

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Beginning the New Year

Salam ʿalaykum everyone! I would like to first extend my condolences to all of you as we enter the month of Muharram. This is the month where we remember Imam Husayn (a) and the shuhada of Karbala. We pray to Allah and ask Him to give us the same blessings as the shuhada of Karbala: patience, the opportunity to defend our Imam, and reaching the highest levels of jannah. O Allah, give us the strength and tawfeeq to become like the shuhada of Karbala. O Allah, include us amongst the closest companions of our Imam so that we can become closer to You. After all, everything we do is for You, O Allah.

Tonight is the first night of the first month of the Islamic calendar, Muharram. So, tonight is the Islamic new year. When we look around, we see everyone preparing for the new year by helping at the masjid, crying, and wearing black. But this is very different to how we see people of other cultures celebrate the new year. We see them decorating, celebrating, and holding parties. This makes sense since their new year is a happy occasion.

But we Shia spend our new year remembering the most tragic, yet most beautiful, event that has ever taken place. We spend the new year mourning, reflecting, and remembering our beloved Imam Husayn (a). Mourning means to feel or show sadness about something. So, when we mourn for Imam Husayn (a), we are showing our sadness for what happened to him. During this month, we attend the majalis of Imam Husayn (a), and some among us are even blessed with the opportunity to visit Karbala.

Even though most of us won't have the opportunity to visit Imam Husayn (a) physically during this month, we can still join his caravan with our hearts and souls. And this is why we gather here together tonight. Let us, once more, remember the story of this beautiful event.

The First Revelation

The story of Karbala actually began much before the actual event of Karbala! It began in Mecca at the time of Prophet Muhammad (s). Every year, the Prophet (s) would go up to the Cave of Mount Hira and spend 40 days reflecting, pondering, and worshipping. While he was up there, Hadhrat Khadijah and Imam Ali (A) would bring him food from time to time. When he was 40 years old and took his annual trip to the mountain, these 40 days were not like the other years. On the 40th night, the Prophet (s) was visited by Angel Jibraʿil who brought the first *wahy*, or revelation from Allah. He taught him the following ayah of the Qur'an:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

Read in the name of your Lord who created. (96:1)

When the Prophet (s) received this ayah, the first thing he wanted to do was share it with everyone! Isn't that something we all like to do? Whenever you get good news or find out something interesting, don't you want to share it with everyone?! For example, when you find out your favorite cousins are coming to visit, you immediately go tell your brothers and sisters! It's natural for us to want to share good things with others around us.The Prophet (s) was like this way more than anyone else. He always wanted to

spread goodness and share good things with others.

Meanwhile, people were gathered at the bottom of Mount Safa awaiting the Prophet (s). As the Prophet (s) was climbing down he looked up at the sky and saw it was a new moon - the first night of Muharram. The Prophet (s) received his first wahy on this very night!
Suddenly the Prophet (s) felt a wave of sorrow and grief. He thought to himself, *What is going on, why do I feel so sad?* He asked Allah SWT, "O Allah, guide me, tell me, explain to me - why do I have this sorrowful feeling? My heart is so heavy!"

He then began crying so much that the ground under him became wet with tears. All of a sudden, Angel Jibraeel came and said "Assalaamu alayka, ya Rasoolullah. Indeed Allah SWT sends you His special salaam and says that this feeling you have is a very good one". Then Jibraeel told Prophet Muhammad (s) about the event of Karbala, upon hearing which he cried even more heavily - but how did Jibraeel know about Karbala at that time? Imam Husayn (a) had not even been born yet. This is because he had knowledge from Allah and nothing - past, present, future - is hidden from Allah. The Prophet (s) then went into sajdah and thanked Allah SWT. When he raised his head he said, "O Allah, what a great blessing you are giving me that from my progeny - my grandson - will be Husayn, who will sacrifice everything for you."
He thanked Allah SWT for blessing his grandson with the opportunity to sacrifice himself for Islam.

That was the first narration of the events of Karbala.

Significance of Muharram
Remembering and crying for Imam Husayn (a) is a tradition started by the Prophet (S) that has continued over the past 1,400 years. Even today, Muslims all around the globe mourn for Imam Husayn (a). When they see the new moon of Muharram, they begin to cry because they remember the tragedy of Karbala. A beautiful hadith from Imam ar-Ridha says that "When you see the new moon of Muharram, raise your hands and ask Allah for anything, and He will grant you that wish if it is good for you."[1]

Tonight is the first of Muharram, so this is the night to make dua, and inshaAllah Allah will grant us these duas. What are some special duas we can make tonight? Of course we can ask for anything, but the best things we can ask Allah for are guidance, protection for Muslims all around the world, and strength to support the weak, poor, and needy. But above all, we should pray for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (aj) and to be included among his helpers and closest companions. InshaAllah for the sake of Imam Husayn (a), Allah will grant us these duas.

Mourning for the Shuhada
So, we have gathered tonight and will continue to gather for the next 10 nights to remember the sacrifice of Imam Husayn (a) and his family and companions. But let's first learn a little bit about the events of Karbala. When and where did these events take place? They took place about 1,380 years ago in a desert called Karbala, which is now a city in Iraq. Wow, that's a long time ago! So, why do we remember and cry for these events after so many years and centuries? I mean, people die all the time, and we feel sad, but only for a certain amount of time.

Has someone close to you, such as a family member, passed away? At first, you feel really sad and it's very hard to take the pain. You feel miserable and it's hard to go back to your regular life. But as time goes on, that person remains in your memories, but the pain slowly decreases, and life returns to normal.
NOTE TO TEACHER: if you can, provide a personal example of how the pain of losing a close family member or friend slowly diminishes OR use the general example below]

Moulana Abidi, an aalim in San Jose, has told us about the death of his father and what he went through.
1 ʿUyūn Akbār ar-Riḍā, Vol. 1, P. 60

He said, ”My whole life was my father. I couldn’t even think for one second about losing him. My love for him was so strong that as a child, I thought I would die if something ever happened to my father. Then, around four years ago, my brother called me to tell me our father was in the hospital. He was really sick, and they weren’t sure he was going to make it. When I heard this, I couldn’t stop crying. I felt scared for my father and didn’t want to lose him. My mother told me to hold on and have patience. A few hours passed, and they said his health was declining. After five hours, my brother called and told me our father had died. When I heard this I felt like collapsing - all my energy was gone. My children tried to comfort me, but for the first couple days I was still in shock. As time went by - a week, a month - I began to feel better. Now when I remember him I still might shed some tears but the grief is not as deep as it was when he first passed.”

From this example and many others, we can see that even though we feel sad after we lose a loved one, this sadness eventually becomes less as time passes by. For Imam Husayn (a), however, it is the opposite — our sadness increases as more time passes. After fourteen centuries, more and more people are moved and inspired by the message of Imam Husayn (a). Year after year, we continue to mourn and cry for Imam Husayn (a). Why is that? Why is Imam Husayn (a) so special that even after fourteen centuries, people all around the globe want to connect with him?

For a moment, close your eyes and take your heart to Karbala. Think about what Imam Husayn (a) did, all the sacrifices he made. Everything he did was for the sake of Allah. The more you do in the way of Allah, the more Allah loves and rewards you. Allah has given Imam Husayn (a) the highest reward by keeping his sacrifice alive in the hearts of people until the Day of Judgement.

One of the most important reasons we are sitting here talking about Imam Husayn (a) and the shuhada of Karbala is because we want to improve ourselves and become the best we can be. The Prophet brought Islam for this very reason, to help us become perfect human beings, and everything Imam Husayn (a) did was for our guidance, for us to improve ourselves and become closer to Allah.

Imam Husayn (a) and the shuhada of Karbala are the best examples of what it means to be close to Allah and reflect His attributes. From their stories, we learn how to be patient in times of hardship, to always follow the truth, and that it is never too late to ask for forgiveness and turn back to Allah. We remember their sacrifice in order to understand the message of Imam Husayn (a) and apply it in our own lives. That is why we are sitting here today on the 1st night of Muharram.

Museebah: Muslim ibn Aqeel

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Tonight, on the first night of Muharram, we remember the first shaheed of Karbala. Although he was not with Imam Husayn (a) in Karbala, he was the first one to give his life for his Imam. His name is Muslim ibn Aqil, and he was the ambassador, or representative, of Imam Husayn (a). Months before the battle of Karbala took place, Imam Husayn (a) received thousands of letters from the people of Kufa. They invited him to Kufa and promised the Imam that they would defend him. They wanted to fight against Yazid, but they wanted the Imam to join them first.

After reading all these letters, Imam Husayn (a) called his beloved cousin Muslim ibn Aqeel and gave him a special task. He wanted to see if the Kufans were loyal and truly meant what they said. So, Imam Husayn (a) gave him a letter and told him, "This is my letter. I want you to go to Kufa as my ambassador and share my message with the people."

Muslim thought to himself, *Wow! I'm going to Kufa as the Imam's representative!* He felt honored to be given such a great task! So he went ahead of Imam Husayn's (a) caravan and made his way to Kufa. There, he addressed the people, telling them about Imam Husayn (a) and his mission. More than 18,000 people gave him *bayah*, which means they promised to support him and the Imam. So, Muslim immediately wrote to Imam Husayn (a) and told him to come to Kufa quickly — the Kufans were loyal after all!

But it wasn't long before Yazid's people began to threaten the Kufans and scare them from supporting Imam Husayn (a). Scared for their lives, many of them broke their promise and turned against Muslim ibn Aqeel.

One night, he went to lead the Maghrib prayer with around 100 other people following him. When he turned around after Isha, only 5 or 10 people were left. And when he left the masjid, there was no one left. He was all alone in a strange city. Eventually, an army was sent to capture and kill him, but Muslim did not give in so easily. He fought bravely and managed to defeat the soldiers, one by one. Then, they began coming in pairs and in groups. Still, he defeated them until finally, the entire army surrounded him and took Muslim to the palace of Ubaydallah ibn Ziyad, the evil governor of Kufa.

Ibn Ziyad ordered Muslim to be killed. But before they killed him, Muslim ibn Aqeel turned towards where his Imam was and called out, "*Assalaamu ʿalayka, ya Aba Abdillah*! — Peace be upon you, O Aba Abdillah!" Maybe he was thinking, *O my dear Imam Husayn! Don't come to Kufa! These people will turn their backs on you like they turned their backs on me!*

When Imam Husayn (a) received the news about what had happened to his cousin, he was filled with sadness. He sorrowfully called the daughter of Muslim, who was in Imam Husayn's (a) caravan.

The little girl came to Imam Husayn (a), but he could not bring himself to tell her the painful news. He only comforted her and put his hand on her head. She noticed the Imam (a) treating her differently and asked, "O uncle, you're treating me the same way people treat orphans. What has happened?"

Imam Husayn (a) sadly replied, "From now on, consider me your father." What a comfort this must have been for the daughter of Muslim ibn Aqeel. But O Aba Abdillah, what about your daughters? What about Sakina and Ruqayya? There was no one to comfort them after their father was killed! There was no one to protect them after he was gone!

Assalaamu ʿalayka, ya Aba Abdallah.

Speech #2: Making Good Choices

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللهِ فِي الْاَرَضِين

The Importance of Majalis

Salam ʿalaykum everyone! We thank Allah once more to be granted the blessing of attending the majalis of Imam Husayn (a). The first day of Muharram has come to an end, and we have now entered the second night. There's a hadith from our 6th Imam, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a) that states, "Whenever there is a majlis that takes place in the month of Muharram, Allah gives the angels permission to go and sit in the gathering."[1] How many angels do you think attend the majlis? One? Ten? One hundred? Not even close! More than 1,000 angels come and attend these majalis, and when they go back to Allah , their rank is much higher than it was before.

Why are these majalis so important that we get so much reward just for attending?! It's because when we attend majalis and remember the events of Karbala, it helps us to become better Muslims and human beings. When we look at what happened in history, we learn what we should and shouldn't do. We learn from history all the time when we listen to certain stories. For example, how many of you have heard the story of Hajara? Let me tell you about this amazing story!

Hajara Looks for Water

Many years ago, Prophet Ibrahim, his wife Hajara, and their 6-month-old baby Ismaeel traveled to a desert that later became the city of Mecca. It was extremely hot and dry in the desert and there was no food or water. Allah told Prophet Ibrahim to leave Hajara and Ismaeel in the desert and return to his hometown. Why do you think Allah did this? Of course, he wanted to test Prophet Ibrahim.

Soon after Prophet Ibrahim left, Hajara and Ismaeel ran out of whatever food and water they had brought with them. Remember, Ismaeel was only a little baby, so he felt very thirsty. Hajara didn't know what to do, so she decided to leave him and began searching for some water. She looked in all directions — north, south, east, and west. In the distance, she saw the mountain of Safa and climbed it to get a better view of the land.

From the top of Safa, she could see water near a mountain in the distance, the mountain of Marwa. She quickly ran to Marwa to find the water, but when she got there ,the water was gone! You see, there really was no water — it was just a mirage, which is when it looks like there's something, but it's not actually there. Hajara then looked back to the Safa, and now she now saw water on that mountain too! She ran back to Safa, but again it was all just a mirage. She ran back and forth between Safa and Marwa 6 times thinking there was water. When she reached Marwa for the 7th time, she fainted because she was so tired! Imagine running back and forth and up and down two hills in the heat without any water!

Meanwhile, Baby Ismaeel was crying from thirst. Then, something miraculous happened! Ismaeel kicked the ground with his little feet, and water suddenly began gushing out from the ground! Water flowed everywhere! When Hajara saw this water flowing out so quickly, she said, "Zam zam," which means "Slowly, slowly." Even today, the water spring still exists and gushes out water. This spring is known as Zamzam and its water contains lots of *barakah*, blessings.

1Biḥar ul-Anwār, Vol. 44, P. 282

This event took place thousands of years ago! But to this day, when we go for Hajj, we remember this act of Hajara. Every year, millions of people take time off from work and save up so that they can go to Hajj. In order to complete their hajj, they must go back and forth between Safa and Marwa, just like Hajara did, to remember this special mother and her devotion and obedience to Allah.

How does this story relate to Imam Husayn (a) and the importance of commemorating Muharram? Well, just as Allah wants us to remember Hajara running between Safa and Marwa thousands of years ago, He also wants us to remember Ashura, which happened about 1,400 years ago. Just as Hajara ran back and forth between Safa and Marwa, Imam Husayn, too, had to go back and forth between his campsite and the battlefield, carrying the 72 bodies of the shuhada of Karbala.

Those of you who have gone to Karbala know may remember how far the distance is between where the tents were and where Imam Husayn's (a) shrine is. This wasn't easy for the Imam to do. Allah wants us to remember Ashura not just for one year, or ten years, but until the Day of Judgment. Allah wants us to remember these events so that we can learn from them and be guided to the right path. You see, there is a special power that exists in the story of Imam Husayn (a). The Prophet (s) has said, "Surely, there is power, strength, and love in the name of Husayn." This is why some people begin crying even just by hearing the name of Imam Husayn (a). It is a special name and a special message that touches the hearts of the believers and helps them to become better.

Making Good Choices

Right now, we are sitting in the majlis of Imam Husayn (a). How blessed are we! You all could choose to go outside and play, but instead, Allah gave you the tawfeeq, the special gift and ability, to sit here among the angels and listen to the story of Imam Husayn (a). Throughout our lives, we are given many choices — some good, some bad. Tonight, we are given the choice to sit here or go outside. We can choose to listen or ignore. We can speak the truth or tell lies. We can do our homework or choose not to. When we make good choices, we are rewarded, and not only that, but Allah also helps us to make more good choices in the future! But if we make bad choices, there are certain consequences for these choices. For example, when we don't do our homework, we may get a bad grade. When you are given the choice to do your homework or play, it might seem more fun to play all day instead of study. But, this choice will hurt us later on when we have to take our test! When we make good choices, we are much happier because instead of facing consequences, we receive rewards, good results, and comfort.

But the tricky thing is that Shaytaan tries to make our bad deeds look good to us without us even realizing it! In the Quran, Allah says, "*Shaytaan made their deeds seem beautiful to them* (16:63)." He tricks us by making our bad deeds look good. What do I mean by this? Well, imagine there are two cups of water. One has dirty sewage water mixed with honey and sugar, and the other has pure, clean water. Which one is better to drink? The first cup may have honey and sugar in it, but its water is still dirty. It has honey, so it might taste sweet, but the honey is only there to cover up for the fact that the water in the cup is actually really dirty. The honey doesn't make the water any less dirty, does it? Similarly, Shaytaan makes bad deeds look good when they really aren't by making them taste sweet, so we have to be able to tell the difference and always choose the good deeds.

One of the best examples that shows how Shaytaan makes bad choices look good can be found in Karbala. There was an evil man named Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, whom Yazid appointed as the governor of Kufa. When Muslim ibn Aqeel came to Kufa, thousands of people pledged allegiance to Imam Husayn (a). But Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad tricked people into turning against Muslim ibn Aqeel. How did he do this? By bribing them with money and promising that he would give them high government positions. One of the people who Ibn Ziyad managed to deceive was Imam Husayn's (a) good childhood friend, Umar ibn Sa'd. Umar was so fascinated by Ibn Ziyad's promise that he ended up becoming the commander of Yazid's army. He was the one who ordered that Imam Husayn (a) be killed! Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad

promised Umar ibn Saad that if he turned against Imam Hussain (a), he would make him the governor of a place called Rey, which is now known as Tehran.

Umar ibn Saad had a choice. He thought, *Should I turn against Imam Husayn or not? I know that the Prophet said, "Innal Husayn Misbahul Huda wa Safinatun Najaat — Surely, Husayn is the lantern of guidance and boat of rescue. And I know the Prophet used to kiss the neck of Imam Husayn and play with him and said that he would be the leader of the youth of heaven.* He knew all this. But he still went back and forth. *But if I kill him,I'll get lots of money and power. If I don't, I'll never become the governor of Rey.* The whole night, he thought and thought. In the morning, he made his decision: *Forget about our friendship. Forget about the Prophet. I'll kill Husayn so that I can get money and a high position*. This is how Shaytaan deceives us. He made this terrible deed look attractive to Umar ibn Saʿd.

The choices we make are upto us. We decide whether or not we make good decisions. Here we are in the majlis of Imam Husayn (a). Let's make a promise to the Imam of our time that we want to do good. We want to be on the side of Imam Husayn (a). We don't want to cheat others. We don't want to lie. We don't want to do bad deeds. We want to be good and make good choices. O Imam, please help us be like the companions of Imam Husayn, and give us the strength and *tawfeeq* to make good choices, inshaAllah!

Museebah

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Tonight is the 2nd night of Muharram. Take your heart to the land of Karbala and imagine yourself among the caravan of Imam Husayn (a). His caravan has already been through so much! They traveled from one city to another — all the way from Medina to Mecca, and then from Mecca to Karbala. When the caravan finally reached Karbala, Sayyidah Zaynab, the beloved sister of Imam Husayn (a), came to him and said, "O my brother, I've had a bad feeling ever since we arrived in this land. I feel anxious, and my eyes are filled with tears. What is this strange land?"

Imam Husayn (a) asked some of his companions to go and find out the name of this land. People told them many different names. Finally, one person said the land is called Karbala — the land of hardships and calamities. Imam Husayn (a) picked up some sand of Karbala and said, "O Allah, this is the land where I will fulfill Your promise! And this is the land where all of us will become shaheed!"

When Imam Husayn (a) said this, his sister Sayyidah Zaynab started to cry. Why? Because she knew that soon her family will become martyred and shaheed in this land. She said to the Imam, "O my beloved brother! I had a dream where I saw our mother, Fatimah az-Zahra (a), crying."

Imam Husayn (a) replied, “Yes, my beloved sister, I also had a dream this morning where our grandfather, Rasul Allah (s), was calling me and saying, ‘O Husayn! Get ready for the greater sacrifice.’ These are the last days of my life, and soon I will join him and my mother.”

Imam Husayn (a) called all the children and began hugging and kissing them one-by-one, and told them that this was the promised land where Allah wants them to stay.

The Imam’s four year old daughter of Imam Husayn (a) came and said, “O Father, am I going to become an orphan soon?”

Imam Husayn (a) told her, “O my daughter, Sakina, yes you will become an orphan soon, but know that Allah wants us to go through this test and He will reward you with the best reward.”

The two daughters of Imam Husayn (a), Sayyida Ruqaiyya and Sakina cried alongside everyone else, and Sayyidah Zaynab and Umm Kulthum consoled them, trying to make them feel better.

Imam Husayn (a) then cried out, “O Allah! Protect us from difficulty and hardships. I am ready to make this sacrifice!” This is when Allah gave Imam Husayn (a) *sakina* - peace and tranquility. When Imam Husayn (a) felt this peace, he said “Alhamdulillah” and fell into sajdah, thanking Allah.

Speech #3: Truth and Falsehood

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Salāmun ʿalaykum!
We're gathered her once more for our third majlis in remembrance of Imam Husayn (A). When Imam Hasan (a) was a young child, much like all of you, he used to sit in the back of the masjid and listen very carefully to his grandfather, Prophet Muhammad (s), as he gave speeches. When he would come home, his mother Sayyidah Fatimah (a) would ask him what he learned, and he would repeat what he had heard in his speech. This is a very good practice for all of us — on the way home from the majalis, it's good to talk to your parents and tell them what all you learned!

Tonight, I want to talk about a very important topic with all of you: truth and falsehood. Specifically, I want to discuss how we know whether something is true or false, good or bad, and how to stand up for the truth. Finally, we will talk about some ahkaam — rules of Islam — taught to us by the Quran and Ahlul Bayt, and we will end the speech by remembering Imam Husayn (a). If you're ready to begin, please send a loud salawat!

First, let's talk about what is right and what is wrong. What is truth and what is falsehood? I want you to think to yourself: what are some good actions we should practice? And what are some bad actions we should avoid?

I think we all at least some actions that are good, but that may be hard to practice sometimes. For example, when we go to the store, we know which foods are halal and good to buy. Even if the haraam food looks delicious and yummy, we don't buy them because we know they are haraam and that they will actually be harmful for us, even though they may taste good. In this way, sometimes bad things appear to be good, and good things appear to be bad.

Another example is when your mom wants you to eat a healthy cereal for breakfast. It may not taste very yummy, but it has protein, fiber, and other nutrients that are good for our bodies — and you'll actually find that the more you eat healthy food, the more you enjoy it, because that is how our bodies are created. Junk food tastes good sometimes, but has it ever been the case where you eat a lot of junk food and feel sick afterwards? That happens because it is not good for you. The same goes for good and bad actions. This is why even if a bad action may have seemed fun or not important at the moment, we feel bad about it later, just as we feel sick when we eat lots of junk food. We were created for and meant to do good actions!

Last night, we discussed how we have the choice to make good or bad decisions. We gave the example of someone who made a bad choice to turn against and fight Imam Husayn (a) even though they were childhood friends. Umar ibn Saʿd was a good friend of Imam Husayn (A), but later went against him. Why? Because he thought by killing Imam Husayn (a) he could get power, money, and a high position as governor of the city of Rey. Because of his greed for power, he made the wrong decision and chose to take Yazid's side.

Sometimes, even though we know what is right and wrong, we still don't make the right decision. For example, we all know homework is something good that we should all do, but we still think to ourselves,

“Let me watch tv, let me play my xbox, let me go play outside,” and put off our homework. What happens if we don’t do our homework and don’t study? We won’t do good in school and may not have a successful life. Do we want that to happen? Of course not! Deep down, we all care about being successful more than being able to play all the time. But we do this because we forget about what we want *most* because we’re too concerned with what we want *now.*

Tonight, when you chose to come to this majlis, you were blessed to make the right decision. When you attend this majlis, you learn new things and have the opportunity to be with the martyrs of Karbala on the Day of Judgment. When Allah calls upon the followers of Zaynab, Ali Akbar, Qasim, and Ali Asghar, you will be among them, inshaAllah.

Truth and Falsehood
If we want to be amongst those people who make good choices, we need to be able to tell the difference between truth and falsehood. You see, the people who stood against Imam Husayn (a) made that choice because they were on the side of falsehood. When it comes to the truth, there are three types of people.

The first group of people are those who accept the truth. The second are those who fight against the truth. An example of these types of people are mentioned in Surah al-Baqarah, Verse 146. Allah mentions that the Jews knew the characteristics of the last Prophet, and when they met Prophet Muhammad (s), they knew he had all the characteristics. However, they still chose not to accept the truth and fight against the Prophet. The final group are those people who remain silent, even when they see that others are not telling or standing up for the truth.

How to Identify the Truth
Of course, we all want to be amongst the first group of people, those who accept and support the truth. In order to be in this group, however, we must be able to tell what the truth is. So, how can we identify the truth? Well, there are four main ways.

The first way to identify the truth is through our senses, for example our eyes and ears. This when we see or hear something that makes it clear to us what the truth is. One example is when the Prophets used to show the people miracles. THey would see these miracles with their own eyes, so they knew that this was the truth. Another example is when we read or hear the Quran. We know these words are the words of Allah, so we can hear the truth with our own ears.

The second way to identify the truth is through our fitrah. Each an every one of us has been born with something called a fitrah, which is like our inner instinct. You know that feeling you have in your gut when you know something is or isn’t right? That’s your fitrah. Allah has programmed us all so that we know Him and want to become closer to Him. When we reflect and think about what we know, it becomes clear to us what is and isn’t the truth, because our fitrah gives us that little hint.

The third way to identify the truth is through our ʿaql. Allah has given us all brains and intellect, alhamdulillah. We should use our brains to read, learn, and think. You’re all very smart, and sometimes you don’t even need someone to tell you when something is wrong. For example, no one needs to tell you not to play outside in the rain when you’re sick, because your common sense tells you that you shouldn’t do that! Our intellect helps us tell the difference between truth and falsehood many times.

The final way to identify the truth is by turning to those whom we trust deeply. Alhamdulillah, we are Muslims and have so many great guides, such as the Prophets and Imams. We know they are on the right path and have been sent by Allah to guide us. So, we know we can trust and rely on them to help us figure out what’s the truth and what’s false. They are the best source we can turn to for guidance on all issues.

Today, the scholars are also known for their wisdom, and we can also turn to trustworthy scholars for help on figuring out what's the truth and what's falsehood.

Museebah: Muslim ibn Awsaja & Habib ibn Madhahir

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Let's now take our hearts to Karbala and remember Imam Husayn (a) and the shuhada of Karbala. When Imam Husayn (a) invited people to join his army and stand up against falsehood, only 72 joined. Muslim ibn Awsaja was actually a companion of our Prophet (S) — that's how old he was. He was well-known for so many things, such as reciting the Quran, his detachment from the dunya, and his courage and bravery in battle. They would tell stories about Muslim in war. There was one story about a battle he participated in where the Muslims were attacked. Even before they could even get their ranks ready, Muslim ibn Awsaja stood on his own, ready to defend the Muslims, and managed to take down six of the enemy soldiers. So, he was very brave and valiant.

The other special companion, was a dear friend of Imam Husayn (A), Habib ibn Madhahir, who was also very well- known. He was a companion of his father, Amir ul-Mu'mineen, and he was among the special companions — the Ashab us-sir — who had access to the special teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (A) - those teachings which others did not have the capacity to bear.

Habib had a very deep connection to Imam Husayn (A). He signed the first letter inviting Imam Husayn (A) to Kufa. When he realized that the Kufans had turned their back on the Imam (A), he and Muslim ibn Awsaja decided to make their way to Karbala no matter what. Others saw that Kufa was surrounded and thought if they tried to escape, they would be caught and imprisoned, or even killed. But Habib and Muslim knew that this was something they must do no matter what. They said, "We must join and defend our master Imam Husayn (A)." Yazid's army had blocked the doors of the city so that no one could leave. So, the two companions changed their clothes, got some sheep, and waited until night. They pretended to be shepherds taking their sheep out of the city and escaped the city successfully. They then made their way towards Karbala so they could join their dear friend and master, Imam Husayn (A).

Perhaps it was the case that the Imam (A) was longing for their company. Some say that it was as if the Imam (A) had left a standard that he was waiting for Habib to carry. We can only imagine when these two companions joined the army, how happy the rest must have been, especially the women, that Habib and Muslim are with us.

On the 9th of Muharram, Habib asked Imam Husayn (A), "O my master, will you give me permission to

go to a nearby tribe called the Bani Asad. They have many young people. I'm sure if I talk to them, they will join us." The Imam (A) grants him permission, so he goes and talks to them and actually manages to convince them. There are about 90 young people who say, "Yes, we will join you" and make their way towards Imam Husayn (A).

When Umar ibn Saad finds out what Habib has done, though, he sends 400 people to block their way, and Habib ends up coming back alone.

Imagine, Habib is returning to his master all alone. Maybe he is wondering to himself, "Will my Imam be disappointed? I said I would bring people, but I haven't been successful." But what does Imam Husayn (A) say when he hears what happened? *La hawla wa la quwata ila billah al aliyul adheem*. Look at the status of Habib. When he is reminded of the power of Allah in this universe, He feels better, and any sort of fear or embarrassment goes away.

On the day of Ashura, Muslim ibn Awsaja seeks permission from his master Imam Husayn (A) to defend him. He fights bravely, even despite his old age. But after fighting against such a large army, the weakness and his wounds overcome him. He falls to the ground, but he is not alone. Imam Husayn (A) runs to the side of his old friend and cries out, "May Allah have mercy on you, O Muslim!"

His dear friend, Habib, rushes to his side. He bends down near him. Muslim is breathing his last breaths. Habib says, "O Muslim, it is very difficult for me to bear your loss, but be happy, because you'll be entering paradise. Just tell me one thing, is there anything I can do for you my dear friend?" With his last breaths, Muslim points to Imam Husayn (A) and tells Habib, "O Habib, my only wish is concerning him. Fight in his way until you, too, are killed!"

Habib takes the place of Muslim and defends Imam Husayn (A). He calls out so bravely, "*Ana Habib wa abhi Madhahir* — If you don't know me, I am Habib, the son of Madhahair. We are more purified than you. We will come to the aid of the best of people."

He fights so bravely, but Habib is an old man as well. Eventually, they surround him, one hits him from the front and one from the back, knocking him to the ground. He tries to stand, but one of the soldiers raises his sword. He was so greedy, this man. He knew that the more heads he could collect, the more rewards he would receive from Yazid.

This man rushes back to kufa with his war booty on his saddle, dangling from the side. When he enters Kufa, according to some narrations, as he heads to and from the palace, he realizes he's not alone. There's a young boy following him wherever he goes.

He asks the young boy, "Why is it that you are following me?"
The boy says, "No, it's nothing."
The soldier replies, "No you must tell me."
Finally, the boy says, "You see that head dangling from your saddle? That is the head of my father, Habib ibn Madhahir. Can you please give me the head of my father?"
The soldier says, "If I give you this head, then I won't have anything to give to Ibn Ziyad and earn my reward."

Look at the attachment of this young boy to the head of his father. Now, imagine the women and children of the Ahlul Bayt (A) in the court of Yazid when they see what has happened to the beloved head of their Imam Husayn (A).

La'anatullahi 'ala al-qawm idh-dhaalimeen

Speech #4: Success

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد
وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِى الْاَرَضِين

Salaamun ʿalaykum, everyone! Alhamdulillah, we have gathered here again for the majlis of Imam Husayn (a) on the 4th night of Muharram. Tonight, I want to talk to you about something we all want to reach: success.

What is success? In the Qur'an we have a du'a that I'm sure many of you have heard:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Rabbanā ātina fid dunyā ḥasanah wa fil ākhirati ḥasanah waqinā ʿadhāban nār
Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the fire

(Q. 2:201).

This duʿa tells us, in a nutshell, what true success is: to experience the blessings of Allah both in this life and the next.

What is Success?
We all want to be successful, but what does it mean to be successful? We all have some idea of what that means to us. We can learn about true success from Prophet Adam (a). Prophet Adam (a) was put on Earth thousands of years ago before all other prophets and other humans. He lived for thousands of years, had long, white hair, and walked with a cane. One day, Prophet Adam (a) climbed to the top of a mountain and called together all his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. He was very wise and had a lot to share — I'm sure some of you have grandparents that like to share stories with you, too.

They all gathered together, and many of them had questions for Prophet Adam (a), but instead of answering their questions, Prophet Adam (a) asked *them* a question. He asked, "Who can tell me what it means to be successful in this world?" Prophet Adam (a) listened quietly to everyone's answers. He then said, "There is one thing a person needs to be successful in this world, and that is closeness to Allah. If you please Allah and make Him happy, you will be successful." Can you please everyone? No! But you *can* please Allah.

How Can We Please Allah?
We know that pleasing Allah makes us successful, but how can we please Allah? There is a beautiful story about this from Hadhrat Luqman (a). One day, Hadhrat Luqman (a) was walking with his son when his son asked him, "Why can't we make everyone happy?" Hadhrat Luqman (a) was a wise man and wanted to teach his son a lesson. They had a donkey with them, so he told his son, "If you want to please people, you ride the donkey and I will walk on the side."
While they were walking, people started laughing at them and said, "What a mean son! He's sitting on the donkey while his poor father is walking!" Hadhrat Luqman (a) told his son, "Come down off the

donkey. This time, I'll ride it and you walk on the side." So, this time his son walked while his father rode the donkey, but once again, people started laughing and said, "What a mean father! He sits comfortably while his poor young son is walking!"

Then, Hadhat Luqman (a) told his son, "Okay, let's both sit on the donkey this time." Once again, they were criticized and people said, "How mean! The poor donkey has to bear the weight of both of them." For the last time, Hadhrat Luqman (a) told his son, "This time, let's both walk with the donkey and no one will ride it." Once again, people laughed at them and said, "These two have no sense! They're walking while they have a donkey that they could be riding!"

After seeing all this, Hadhrat Luqman (a) said to his son, "O son! No matter what you do, you can never please people. But you *can* please Allah, and if you please Him, it doesn't matter what others say."[1]

Boys and girls, Hadhrat Luqman (a) taught us that we shouldn't worry about what other people think of us as long as we are doing the right thing. What are some other ways you can think of to please Allah? Let me tell you another story.

One day, the Noble Prophet (s) was giving a sermon, or speech, during Salaatul Jum'ah, the Friday prayers. When someone gives the sermon on Friday, they are supposed to hold a stick or cane. While the Prophet (s) was holding his cane and giving his speech, he told the people that they need to please Allah and become closer to Him. One of the people listening thought to himself, *I'm tired of this dunya. I don't want to work. I just want to pray, read Quran, and worship Allah and please Him.* So, afterwards, he went home, took off his clothes, wrapped himself in a kafan — a simple piece of cloth — and then went toward a mountain outside of Medina. He dug a grave, sat down next to it, and said, "O Allah, I want to be closer to you!" He prayed all night, fasted all day, and read lots of Quran. He thought to himself, *I'm doing such a great thing — I'm definitely getting closer to Allah!*

When the Prophet (s) heard what this man was doing, he was very upset. He said, "O people! Go and bring this person to me. I am not happy with him." So, the people went to the mountain and brought him back to the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) asked the man, "What happened to you? Why are you ignoring your responsibilities?" The man replied, "O Rasul Allah, I want to be successful and get closer to Allah."

The Noble Prophet (s) said, "This is not success. If you want to get closer to Allah, you need to take care of your duties and responsibilities. You need to take care of yourself and your family! If you need to study, then study, and if you need to work, then work, but this is not how you get closer to Allah."

We can look at some examples from the life of the Prophet (s) to help us understand what it means to be successful and get closer to Allah.

The first example is that of a student, like you all! The Noble Prophet (s) used to kiss the hands of students to show that going to school and learning is a way of getting closer to Allah. Allah loves for us to learn and act on what we learn. Allah also loves it when you come to a majlis like this one. These are all ways to get closer to Allah!

A second example we see is that of a farmer. The Noble Prophet (s) met a farmer once whose hands were very hard and rough. The farmer told the Prophet (s), "O Rasul Allah, I go work in the farm everyday to put food on the table for my family." When the Noble Prophet (s) heard this, he kissed the hand of the farmer and told him, "Indeed, you are one of the successful ones." All of our parents work very hard just like that farmer to put food on the table for us. we often don't realize that that is a very difficult thing to do, but this is one of the ways to be successful and become closer to Allah.

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1 قصہ یاہ یآرق نآن ص 453 Qiṣah Hāy Qurʾān, P. 453

The Prophet (s) used these two examples to show us that success and closeness to Allah comes through learning and working hard.

Museebah: Wahab al-Qalbi

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Now, let's take our hearts to Karbala. We talked about how true success comes from pleasing Allah, so let's look at how Imam Husayn (a) did this. As Imam Husayn (a) was walking with his caravan from Medina to Karbala, he came across a desert. The desert was completely empty and had no plants or trees, but in the middle of the desert, there was a small tent. Imam Husayn (a) went over to knock on the door of the tent and an old lady opened it. Imam Husayn (a) said, "Salaamun Alaykum, old lady. What is your name?"

"My name is Umm Wahab," she responded. "I am a Christian. I live here with my son Wahab al-Qalbi and his wife, Haaniya, whom he just married."

Imam Husayn (a) congratulated the lady and told her, "I am Husayn, the grandson of the Noble Prophet. Tell me, do you and your family have any problems living here?"

The lady told him, "We do have one problem: we don't have any water near our tent. Everyday, my son and daughter-in-law have to take all their sheep a long way just to get them water and bring back some for ourselves. This is very difficult for my family."

Imam Husayn (a) told the lady, "I can help you with that. Follow me." Umm Wahab followed Imam Husayn (a) behind the tent. Imam Husayn (a) then picked up a rock, smashed it against the ground, and with the permission of Allah, water starting gushing out.

"Now, your problem is solved and you have water close to your tent," Imam Husayn (a) said.

Umm Wahab thanked Imam Husayn (a) for this huge favor he did for her. As he was leaving, Imam Husayn (a) turned to Umm Wahab and told her, "When your son and daughter-in-law come back, tell them that you saw me and that I am Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet. Tell them that I am alone. I'm here to fight the tyrant, Yazid, who claims to be the leader of the Muslims, but all he wants to do is hurt us and torture the people. When I call for help on the day of Ashura, everyone should come and help me. Tell your son and daughter-in-law that if they like, they can join me."

Umm Wahab waited for her son to come back so she could share what happened. When her son and his wife returned with their sheep, they said "Wow! There is light everywhere! There is water! O Mother, what happened?"

His mother replied, “O my son, a man name Husayn came by.” The moment she said Husayn, Wahab suddenly felt sadness in his heart.

He told his mother, “O my mother, the moment you said ‘Husayn,’ I felt a deep sorrow in my heart.”

She said, “Yes, I feel it, too. He was the best person I’ve ever seen or met. He said he was the grandson of the Noble Prophet (s), but we are Christian and don’t believe in the Noble Prophet (s).”

Her son then said, “O my mother, last night in my dream, I saw Jesus (a). He told me tomorrow I will see the son of the last messenger of Allah, and that if I am approached by him, I must help him and not leave him alone. O mother, this man is a special person.”

Wahab, his mother, and his wife all decided to join Imam Husayn (a). Imam Husayn (a) was very happy that they joined the caravan, but warned them saying, “If you want to come with us, know that we have nothing. We will be fighting a huge army, and they will not be treating us kindly. You will become shaheed and die if you join me.”

Umm Wahab replied, “We understand. Right now, we are Christian, but we want to submit to Allah and become Muslim.”

When Imam Husayn (a) was attacked by Yazid’s army on the day of Ashura, Haaniya, Wahab’s wife, was the first woman ready to give her life. She shouted to the army of Yazid, “O people! Even though I was a Jew and my husband was a Christian, we accepted Islam and we see nothing but good in this man, Husayn. You all claim to be Muslim, and yet you want to kill Husayn, the grandson of your Messenger?!”

The cruel enemies of Islam paid no attention, though, and began to attack, showing no mercy. Both Wahab and Haaniya became shaheed. When Imam Husayn (a) saw this, he came to them and said, “O Allah! Bear witness that these are great people. Even though they were Jew and Christian, they gave their lives for Islam.”

While Imam Husayn (a) was thanking Allah, Umm Wahab came to him and said, “O son of the Noble Prophet (s), I want to know the reward of my son. After all, I only had one son and it is only for the sake of Allah that I came to help you.”

Imam Husayn (a) told her his reward is that he will be raised with the Noble Prophet (a) on the Day of Judgment and that he received the best of this world and the next. May Allah help us have strong dedication like Wahab, Haaniya, and Umm Wahab so that we can be truly successful in this world and the next.

La‘anatullahi ‘ala al-qawm idh-dhaalimeen

Speech #5: The Sanctity of Karbala & Maajalis

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Salaamun alaykum, everyone! Alhamdulillah we have been given the opportunity to gather once more on these precious nights of Muharram to remember our leader and master, Imam Husayn (A). These majaalis are no ordinary gatherings — they are special gatherings and should be given a special importance. That is why tonight, I'd like to speak with you all about the importance of the majaalis of Imam Husayn (a) and why we should respect these gatherings. I also want to share with you some amazing stories about miracles that have occurred through these very majaalis!

Why Do We Hold Majaalis?

There is a lot of emphasis in our ahadith and the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (a) that encourage us to commemorate the shahadah of Imam Husayn (a). They give us many reasons why we should do so. InshaAllah tonight, we will look at four of these reasons.

The first reason we should give so much importance to the event of Karbala is because it is a sign of the muttaqin, the God-conscious believers. In Surah Hajj, verse 32, Allah says:

وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّـهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

And whoever respects the sacred signs of Allah, that is surely a sign of the God-conscious hearts (22:32)

The Ahlul Bayt (A) are one of the sacred signs of Allah, so anything that has to do with them is also a sign of Allah. Therefore, the majaalis, which are connected to Imam Husayn (A), are a sign of Allah. For this reason, we must respect these signs. These majaalis are like a flag. What's the purpose of a flag? A flag represents something else. Our majaalis represent our relationship and connection to Imam Husayn (a) and the Ahlul Bayt.

The second reason we should give the event of Karbala so much importance is because Allah has told us that we should love the Ahlul Bayt. When we remember the tragedy of Karbala, this actually increases our love of the Ahlul Bayt, so we are doing what Allah has asked us to do. There is a hadith from the Prophet (s) where he has said, "Train your children in three areas: love of the Prophet (s), love of his family, and the recitation of the quran." We see that when we remember the event of Karbala, we are actually doing all three of these things because they are all present in the event of Ashura.

The third reason Karbala should be given a lot of importance is because it is one of the best ways for us to learn and actually increases our status. When we sit here and listen to reminders about our akhlaq and religion, we learn how we should live our lives. When we practice what we learn, we move closer to Allah and reach a higher status! We also learn about some role models, like Hurr and Qasim, who show us how we can make good choices and become closer to Allah.

A fourth reason we should honor the event of Karbala is because it motivates us to stand up against

oppression. All over the world, our brothers and sisters are going through so many difficulties! Karbala might have happened hundreds of years ago, but the Yazids of today are still alive. When we remember Imam Husayn (a) and how he stood up for the truth, we are reminded that we also have the responsibility to stand up for the truth. At the very least, we can pray for the oppressed believers around the world and for the quick return of our Imam (aj), so that we can join him in spreading justice and peace.

How to Keep the Message of Imam Husayn (a) Alive
Now that we've learned *why* it is so important to commemorate and keep the message of Karbala alive, let's look at *how* we can do this.

One of the best ways to keep the message of Imam Husayn (A) alive is through these very majaalis we hold. Did you know that all the Imams held majaalis like these? The tradition of majaalis started with Imam as-Sajjad (a) after Karbala. He would invite others and tell them about what happened in Karbala, and everyone would cry and weep. Our 6th Imam, Imam as-Sadiq (a) would invite poets who would recite poetry about Karbala. This was to encourage others to cry, because this is is how the message of Karbala remains alive — through our tears.

Another way to keep the message of Karbala alive is by performing ziyarat of Imam Husayn (A) in karbala. One day, someone came to Imam as-Sadiq (a) and saw him in sajdah, crying and making du'a. He listened carefully and heard that the Imam (a) was praying for those who were visiting the grave of Imam Husayn. The Imam prayed, "If they've spent money, give them wealth. If they have difficulties, give them ease. If they are sick, cure them. He prayed so much for the visitors of Imam Husayn (A) that when he lifted his head up from sajdah, his entire beard was drenched with tears!

The companion asked the Imam, "O Imam, why did you pray so much for the zawwar (visitors)?"

The Imam replied, "Those in the heavens pray even more than those on the earth for the visitors of Imam Husayn (A). Don't you want to be amongst the ones who shook the hands of all the Prophets? Then, do ziyarat of the grave of my grandfather Imam Husayn (a). Performing ziyarat of Imam Husayn is like performing ziyarat of Allah and speaking to Him!"

Unfortunately, many of us are not able to be in Karbala these days, but we can still recite the ziyarat of Imam Husayn (a). These nights, when you come to the center, you probably hear the recitation of Ziyarat Ashura. It's good to listen to this recitation and try to follow along with the English. But more than just listening, try to also reflect on some parts of the ziyarat and what they mean.

A third way we can keep the message of Karbala alive is by doing something most of us do already: performing sajdah on the turbah of Imam Husayn (a). The sand of Karbala has a lot of special barakah and blessings, so inshaAllah when we perform sajdah on it, we will receive some of these blessings.

Finally, one of the best ways to keep Karbala alive is through our tear. When we listen to the museebah, or the sad part of a majalis where we remember what Imam Husayn (a) went through, we should try our best to cry. If we can't cry, we can still show our sadness. By doing this, we will keep the message of Imam Husayn (a) alive in our hearts and in the hearts of others. I'd like to share a story with you about the miracles that come out of these majaalis and how our tears help us in this world and the next.

The Miracle of Mourning for Imam Husayn (a)
Allamah Tabatabai was one of our greatest scholars. He is famous for one of the books he wrote called Tafsir al-Mizan, which helps us better understand the Quran.

There is a miraculous story about Allamah Tabatabai that I want to share with youi. When he was only 6

or 7 years old, he fell extremely ill. The doctors could not find out what was wrong or how to treat him. He almost died because the doctors had no idea what to do! Hopeless, his mother went from one hospital to the next searching for a doctor who could cure him, but without success. Then, someone suggested they go to the majlis of Imam Husayn (a) to try and seek a cure through Aba Abdillah (a).

So, little Allama's mother took him to a majlis and pleaded to Imam Husayn (a), crying, "O my master Husayn (a), please cure my son! If you do, I promise to dedicate his life to you." As she was crying and talking to Imam Husayn (a), the speaker of the majlis began retelling the events of Karbala - the museebah, where we remember and cry for the Imam. When he reached the part about Ali Asghar and the other children of Karbala, Allama's mother could no longer hold back her sorrow and began to cry heavily, the tears falling upon her son. Then something miraculous happened — Allamah opened his eyes for the first time in months!

His mother was so shocked to see this that she nearly fainted! What happened? Little Allama told his mother he had a dream in which Sayyidah Fatimah (a), the mother of Imam Husayn (a), put her hand on his face, and through this, he was miraculously cured. When his mother heard this, she thanked Imam Husayn (a) and then took little Allama to learn under the great Allama Qadhi so that he could dedicate his life to Imam Husayn (a) as she promised.

Turba of Imam Husayn (a)
Every year during Muharram, Allama Qadhi would hold majaalis where he would retell the museebah and sad events of Imam Husayn (a) in Karbala. He always held these majaalis, no matter how few attended, and continued to do so until his last breath. When Allama Qadhi was on his deathbed, his son and a few of his students came to visit him, asking if he needed anything. He said that all he wanted was turbah from Karbala.

The turba we use for salaah has a special significance. When Imam Ali (a) was returning to his capital Kufa after the battle of Siffin, he passed the land of Karbala. When passing a strange feeling entered him and he wondered why he felt that way.

Imam Ali (a) had Ilm al-ghayb - hidden knowledge from Allah SWT - and through this was able to see Jibraeel reciting the majlis of Imam Husayn (a). When Imam Ali (a) heard this, he began to cry. He took a handful of the sand of Karbala and brought it back with him to Kufa - from that day on, he did his salaah on that sand just as we all do today.

We have learned two things: that true success is closeness to Allah (SWT) and that we have role models, the Ahlul Bayt and Imam Husayn (a), to help guide us on that path.

Museebah: Hadhrat Hurr

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

We see the mercy and guidance of Imam Husayn (a) all over Karbala. Even on the day of Ashura, Imam Husayn (a) stood in front of his enemies, asking if there was anyone to help him so he could save and guide more people to the right path.

One of these men on the other side, who started off on the wrong path and then came to the right path, was Hurr ibn Yazid ar-Riyahi. Hurr was continuously looking to make himself better and make the best choices, something we should always be trying do as well.

Hurr was the commander of Yazid's army and was ordered to stop Imam Husayn (a) from going to Kufa. The army wouldn't let him return to Madina, nor would they let him go forward to Kufa. Instead, they made him stop in a place called Karbala. On that day, when Imam Husayn (a) met the army of Hurr, he offered them water and even offered their horses water. Everyone was surprised!

His soldiers told him, "O my master Husayn (a), these are the enemies! Why are you giving them water?!"

But Imam Husayn (a) replied, "We are Muslims, and we have to have the best of akhlaq, even with our enemies."

"You have no right to stop me", Imam Husayn (a) told him. "If you dare to stop me, your mother will weep for you." What Imam Husayn (a) meant was that stopping him was such a terrible act that it would cause his mother to weep for him.

When Hurr heard this, he became nervous. You see, he knew the position of Imam Husayn (a). He said to the Imam, "O Husayn, I cannot say the same back to you because your mother is Sayyidah Fatimah (a), the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s)."

After seeing Imam Husayn's great *akhlaq* over those few days, Hurr felt very confused in the days leading up to Ashura. His heart was torn. A strong voice inside of him was telling him he was not doing the right thing, and that the right thing was to join Imam Husayn (a). But how could he? He was the commander of the army! How would he be able to face everyone? On the other hand, he saw that the children of Imam Husayn (a) and how they were thirsty while the army of Yazid had plenty of water. He thought to himself, *Why did I stop Imam Husayn (a)? What will happen on the Day of Judgment? What will Sayyidah Fatimah (a) say to me? What will the Prophet (s) say?*

Alas, it was the day of Ashura, and Hurr was pacing back and forth, when his son asked him, "O father, what are you doing?"

He answered, "O my son! I see myself between Heaven and Hell, and I need to make the right decision."

Finally, he went towards Imam Husayn's (a) army on his horse with a white flag showing he wanted peace. He got off the horse, put his head down and said, "O the son of Zahra! Is there any space for you to forgive me? I'm so sorry!"

Imam Husayn (a) took him into his arms and forgave him. He wanted to take him back to the tents, but Hurr said, "No, I can't face everyone! Please give me permission to fight first and die for you, O my Imam!"

Imam Husayn (a) gave Hurr permission to go into the battlefield and to become one of the first martyrs on the day of Ashura. After fighting bravely, he fell off his horse. When he suddenly opened his eyes, he saw his head was in the lap of Imam Husayn (a)! The Imam (a) was wiping the blood from his face and looking down at him. How kind was this Imam that he not only guided and forgave him, but even took

him into his arms and his head onto his lap! But on the day of Ashura, there was no one left to take Imam Husayn's (a) head onto their lap, no one to wipe away his blood.

In his last few breaths, Imam Husayn (A) whispered to Hurr, "You are indeed Hurr (free), as your mother named you. You are free both in this world and the Hereafter." The skies of Karbala watched as the soul of Hurr rose to the next world and was greeted by the Prophet (S). InshaAllah the Prophet (S) may one day await all of us if we are brave enough to choose to be amongst the companions of Imam Husayn (A).

Speech #6: Qualities of a Shi'a

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِى الْاَرَضِين

Salaamun alaykum everyone! I'd like to thank Allah for giving us the opportunity to come together for another night to remember and mourn for our dear Imam Husayn (a). I pray that we are all counted as his true followers and Shi'a, inshaAllah. How many of you have heard this word before — Shi'a? We always mention that we are the Shi'a, but what does this mean? What is a Shi'a and what are their qualities?

In order to have and express the qualities of a Shi'a, we must understand what it truly means to be a Shi'a. A Shi'a is different than someone who just loves the Ahlul Bayt. A person who loves the Ahlul Bayt is called a *muhib*. A muhib loves and admires the Ahlul Bayt, but doesn't necessarily follow them. Many of us are muhib, but we want to be even better than that — we want to be among the Shi'a. The Shi'a are those who not only love, but also *follow* the Ahlul Bayt. They are the true followers of the Ahlul Bayt.

Becoming a Shi'a

So how do we follow the Ahlul Bayt? Following them does not simply mean to copy what they did. No, we must follow them based on love and understanding. There are three simple steps that we should follow if we want to do this.

The first step is to get to know the Ahlul bayt. If you want to be like someone, it only makes sense that you get to know them and what they are like. It is only by knowing them that we come to love them and believe in their message. What are some ways we can get to know the Ahlul Bayt? We can read books about them, like the Kisa Kids *Heavenly Children* and *Blessed Names* series; we can ask our parents to tell us more stories; and simply by coming to these majaalis we learn about them. Once we know what they are like, we know how we should also be.

Secondly, we must not only get to know them, but also love them deeply in our hearts. When we hear about their lives and their amazing akhlaq, it's only natural for us to love them. They were so close to Allah and behaved in the best of ways, so of course we love them.

When you know someone and love them, then you naturally want to be like them, right? That is why the third and final step is to follow the actions of the Ahlul Bayt (a). If we want to become their true followers, we should be similar to them in our akhlaq and actions.

By following these three steps, we can move forward in the world as Shi'a of the Ahlul Bayt, inshaAllah!

Qualities of a Shi'a

How can we tell if we are true Shi'a? Well, the Shi'a have many different qualities. Our 8th Imam, Imam ar-Ridha (a), has explained some of them. During the time of Imam ar-Ridha (a), there was an evil ruler named Ma'moon who forced Imam Ridha (a) to leave Medina and moe to Mashhad. The journey to Mashhad took him 18 months!!! On his way there, he stopped in a city called Ahwaz. When he entered the city, all the people, especially the children, welcomed him with flowers and kissed his hands.
They then asked Imam ar-Ridha (a) a very important question: "Who is a true follower of Imam?"

The Imam (a) replied, “A person cannot be a true follower until he has three great qualities. the first quality is from Allah, and that is to keep others’ secrets. The second quality is from the Noble Prophet (s), and that is to be kind towards others. The third quality is from the Imams (a), and that is to be patient at all times.”[1]

What did the Imam (a) mean when we he said that those qualities are from Allah, the Noble Prophet (s), and the Imams? The Imam is saying that a true follower should look to Allah, the Noble Prophet (s), and the Imams as examples and try to follow their example.

The first quality — to keep secrets — is a quality of Allah. This means that when people tell us secrets or talk to us about their problems, we should keep this to ourselves and not tell others. This is just like what Allah does for us. Allah is *Sattar ul-ʿUyoob*, the hider of mistakes. He knows all our mistakes and sins, but out of His mercy and love for us, He hides these so that no one else finds out about them. As Shi’a, we must try to have this same quality. If we know other people’s secrets and mistakes, we must hide them and not tell others about them.

The second quality — showing kindness to all — is a quality of the Noble Prophet (s). Prophet Muhammad (s) had the best akhlaq and showed kindness towards everyone, even those who were not kind to him. We’ve all heard about the lady who used to throw trash on him everyday. When he found out one day that she was sick, he actually went to visit her and was extra kind to her. As Shi’a, we must treat everyone with kindness, including non-Muslims, and never make fun of them or call them bad names.

The third quality — being patient in all times — was a quality of all the Imams. The Imams were put through many difficult tests, but they always remained patient. They did not get angry or ask Allah, “Why me?!” In fact, they would thank Allah! When Imam al-Kadhim (A) was put into prison, he thanked Allah for giving him the opportunity to have more time to pray and worship Allah. Similarly, we should have patience in all situations, big and small. When things get tough, we should remember how the Imams dealt with their tests. One of the best examples of patience can be seen in Karbala. Despite all the difficulties Imam Husayn (a) faced on that day, he never lost patience and hope in Allah.

Museebah: Aun and Muhammad

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Let’s now take our hearts to Karbala, the land of patience and hope. Tonight, we want to remember two great shuhada of Karbala — two brothers named Aun and Muhammad. Aun and Muhammad were the sons of Sayyidah Zaynab and her husband Abdullah ibn Jafar.

1 Biḥār ul-Anwār, Vol. 75, P. 334

When Imam Husayn (a) wanted to leave Medina, he went to Zaynab's husband, Abdullah ibn Jafar, to tell him he was leaving for Karbala. When Abdullah saw Imam Husayn (a), he began to cry and told him, "I know you are going to be alone in this path. No one will help you but yourself. I know that Allah will help you in all of these hardships, but people will have no mercy."

Abdullah ibn Jafar wished to go with Imam Husayn (a) like everyone else, but could not due to his old age and poor health. He could not walk without a cane and his back was bent. He told Imam Husayn (A), "Since I am so sick and cannot walk, I cannot help you, but I have two gifts for you. One is Aun (16) and the other is Muhammad (14). I have these two young soldiers; they can help you. Will you take them as my gift?"

Imam Husayn (A) cried out loud. He said to Abdullah bin Jafar, "O my brother, may Allah have mercy upon you. I know that you're my best friend and my best follower, and I know that you want to give me a gift, but I prefer that you keep them because you need them."

Abdullah bin Jafar sat down and sighed. "O Husayn," he said, "I had a dream where I saw the Noble Prophet, and he said to me 'O Abdullah, know that if you want to help, you must send send your beloved 'sons with Husayn.'

Imam Husayn (a) accepted and the two young boys went with him to Karbala. On the night of Ashura, Imam Husayn (a) gathered his companions and gave them one final chance to leave. He said, "Tomorrow, there is going to be a big battle, and anyone who remains will become shaheed. Yazid's army is not looking for you — they want me. If you want to leave and escape, you may go. I release you from your responsibilities." He then blew out the candles and everything went dark. How kind was our Imam — he didn't want to shame or embarrass anyone. He wanted to give them the chance to leave in the dark, so no one would see and they wouldn't have to face him.

When Imam Husayn (a) said this, Aun and Muhammad stood up and began to cry. They said, "O Uncle, O Imam, how can we leave you alone and go on with our own lives? That is impossible!"

Aun said, "If we are killed by Yazid's army, and our bodies burned and the ashes thrown everywhere, and then we are brought back to life and this happens all over again 1,000 times, we still would never leave you alone!"

When Imam Husayn (a) heard this, he hugges his two nephews. What a blessing it was for him to have such loyal supporters!

On the day of Ashura, the two brothers fought bravely. Even though they were so young, they were on the battlefield defending their Imam for a long time. Alas, they were both struck and as they fell from their horses, they cried out, "Asalaamu alayka, ya Aba Abdillah!" When Imam Husayn (a) heard their call, he rushed to help them, but by the time he reached them, their bodies had been trampled by the enemy's horses.

What must have been going through Imam Husayn's (a) mind as he carried the bodies of Aun and Muhammad back to the tents? Maybe he was worried about his sister and how he would give her the news. Maybe he was thinking, *Zaynab will be crushed to see her two sons like this. How will she control her tears?*

But when Imam Husayn (a) brought them back to the camp, he saw that Sayyidah Zaynab was sitting inside her tent, not coming out. As soon as she heard Imam Husayn (a) crying outside, she rushed out and asked, "O my brother, why are you crying?"

He asked her, “O Zaynab, did you not hear the news of your two sons?”

Sayyidah Zaynab replied, “They were a gift from me and my husband to you, and they are now in paradise with their grandfather, Rasul Allah (s).”

What strength and faith must Sayyidah Zaynab have had. How much must she have loved her brother and Imam to sacrifice her only two sons in his way?

Now we must think and ask ourselves, what do we have to offer the Imam of our time? If Imam Mahdi (AJ) were to come and say, “*Hal min nasirin yansurni* — is there any helper to help me?” what will we have to offer? Will we be willing to give up our most prized possessions for our Imam? What will we sacrifice in his way?

Speech #7: True Followers of Imam Husayn (A)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

The Throne in Heaven

Once, Allah gave the Noble Prophet (s) a special invitation to visit the Heavens. This special journey was called Miʿraj, and it was such an important journey that Allah even mentioned it in the Quran!

The Prophet's (s) journey began on earth and moved up through the heavens. He started from Mecca, and from there went to Bayt al-Muqaddas, a place in Palestine that was the first qibla of Muslims. From there, he went up to the first Heaven, and while there, he saw many angels and good people who are close to Allah. He then moved up through the second, third, fourth and so on all the way until the seventh heaven. While in the seventh heaven, the Noble Prophet (s) saw something written on the *arsh*, throne, of Allah:

Innal Husayn misbahul huda, wa safeenatun najah
Surely, Husayn is the lantern of guidance and the boat of rescue.

Wow! Imagine how special this Imam Husayn (a) must be! Imagine how important his message must be that his name is inscribed on the throne of Allah! Even today, Imam Husayn (a) is the light of guidance and whoever is with him is saved and successful. We all want to be among the followers of Imam Husayn (a), but in order to do this, we must work hard. The companions of Imam Husayn (a) were special and had certain qualities that allowed them to be his true followers. InshaAllah tonight we will learn about some of these qualities so that we can also try to have these qualities.

The Companions of Imam Husayn (a)

While the companions of Imam Husayn (a) had many great qualities, we want to focus on two of these qualities.

The first quality is loyalty. Imam Husayn's companions were so loyal that they did not leave his side, no matter what. Even on the night of Ashura where he gave them the opportunity to leave, not only did they all stay, but many of them proclaimed that they would never abandon the Imam, even if they were cut up into a million pieces over and over again. His companions did not let the Imam enter the battlefield until they had first given up their lives for him. This is true loyalty — being there for someone until the very end. If we want to be the true followers of the Imam, we must develop this trait of loyalty.

The second quality that all the companions had was *basirah*. *Basirah* is insight, and it basically means that you are able to separate what is good and bad. Someone with *basirah* is someone who listens and ponders. They think about what they hear before acting upon it. For example, if someone tells you something, you don't automatically believe it. You first stop and think whether or not it is true. Secondly, someone with basirah looks at each situation carefully. They don't just do something because everyone else is doing it. And finally, a person with *basirah* takes lessons from history. This is very important because when we study history, we realize how we can make good choices. We see the mistakes people made and try not to repeat those same mistakes. One of our famous aalims has said that our mothers tell us stories at night to put us to sleep, but the Quran tells us stories to wake us up! When we

read the stories in the Quran about the Prophets, we should try to take lessons from these stories and apply them to our own lives.

Imam Ali (a) has said that when a person reaches a high level of *basirah*, he or she walks the path that is clear.

InshaAllah we can try to develop these two qualities of loyalty and *basirah* within ourselves so that we have the same qualities as the companions of Imam Husayn (a). If we are able to develop these qualities, then we can be the supporters of the Imam of our time: Imam al-Mahdi (aj).

Becoming the Companions of Imam az-Zaman (aj)

When we think about the companions of Imam Husayn (a), we think that there can be no companions better than them! But what if I told you that this isn't true? Actually, the best companions to ever exist will be the companions of the Imam of our time, Imam Mahdi (aj)! That means, you and I actually have the opportunity to be the best companions of the Ahlul Bayt!

Habib ibn Madhahir has narrated from the Ahlul Bayt (a) have said that when it comes to the companions of Imam al-Mahdi (aj), "Their hearts are flooded with light and they are very careful not to do anything that will displease Allah. And they make du'a to attain the tawfeeq and blessing of shahadah."[1]

Wow! That's us he's talking about! But wait, there's more!

Imam Ali (A) has said, "The companions of Imam al-Mahdi (aj) are like treasure mines that are full of ma'rifah (deep knowledge) of Allah."[2]

SubhanAllah! You and I want to be the companions of Imam Mahdi (aj), right? That means we have the chance to reach the highest levels! But in order to do so, we have a big responsibility and that is to actively await his return. What does it mean to actively await his return? Let me tell you a story that will help us understand.

Actively Waiting for Our Imam (aj)

Maulana Abidi tells a story about when he went to umrah with his family a few years ago. He says, "We were doing tawaf and my young son Mohammad, who was only two years old, wanted to touch the wall of the Ka'bah! He excitedly ran towards the Ka'bah and before we could get him, he got lost in the crowd. We were so worried about where he went! Do you think it would have been a good idea if we went back to the hotel and waited for him to show up? Of course not! We looked around for him, asked other people if they had seen him, and called his name until we finally found him."

From this story we can learn that there are two types of waiting. One is to just sit around, waiting for someone to show up, and the other is to be actively looking like Moulana Abidi did when he lost Mohammad. When it comes to Imam Mahdi (AJ), we have the same two options. We can decide to just sit around and wait for Imam (AJ) to show up, or we can actively prepare for his return by doing everything we can to pave the way.

We can actively await our Imam (AJ) by preparing ourselves for his arrival and building a good connection with him. We can help build ourselves and become the companions that he needs and is looking for. The Noble Prophet (s) said that Allah loves for us to have a good connection to the Imam (AJ). If we have this connection, we can become true and dedicated companions of Imam Mahdi (AJ)!

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1 Biḥar ul-Anwār, Vol. 52, P. 308

2 Yanābīʿ al-Mawaddah, P. 449

What are some things we can do to build this connection to our Imam (AJ) and be active waiters?

The first is learn about the Imam (aj) of our time. When we learn about him and build a connection with him, we know what types of followers he is looking for. We learn how we can become those followers by making good choices.

Secondly, we can connect with our Imam. One way to do this is by reciting duas, such as Dua Faraj, that pray for his safety and return. We can also just talk to him. Even though we cannot see him, he hears us. So whenever you feel sad, lonely, or even happy, talk to him at any time and for anything because wherever you are, he hears and sees you. InshaAllah this will help you to actively await the Imam and be amongst his most loyal companions when he returns.

Museebah: Hadhrat Qasim

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Now let's take our hearts on a journey to the land of Karbala. It is the 10th of Muharram, the day of Ashura. Since early morning, a battle has been raging on the sands of Karbala. One by one, Imam Husayn's (A) companions face the enemy: some young, some old, some on horse, some on foot; but all were to meet the same fate —killed, in the way of Allah, in the service of their Imam (A).

From the moment the enemy releases the first arrow and begins the attack, Imam Husayn's (A) companions refuse to let any members of his family fight. For as long as there is strength in their bones to protect them, not a single drop of the Prophet's blood will be shed. Men continue to leave, and bodies continue to return, until Imam Husayn (A) can no longer count the number of farewells…until finally, none of those brave souls remain.

And yet, the enemy continues to advance. The members of Imam Husayn's (A) family begin to prepare for battle. Imam Husayn (A) watches as brothers, nephews, and sons enter the fight, refusing to allow him to enter before them; he watches as they are killed evilly on the hot desert sands, never to return.

Sayyidah Zaynab, the sister of Imam Husayn, has been watching the events of the day with eyes that continue to grow older. She has seen so much sadness, that for every body she has seen brought back to the camp, she has seen a new strand of hair turn gray. For every cry she has heard, she has felt a new piece of her heart break.

For a moment, she looks towards where the bodies of her murdered sons lay. Aun and Muhammad, who had just come to ask her permission to allow them to enter the battle to defend their uncle. To defend the cause of Islam. They were so young, and the enemy was so thirsty for their blood – but she knew and

they knew that strength of warriors ran through their veins. They were the children of Ali and Hamza. They were the grandsons of Ja'far at-Tayyaar.

Nearby, Imam Husayn (A) looks off into the distance, and hears someone walk up behind him. It is his young nephew, Hadhrat Qasim. Imam Husayn (A) turns towards him and finds a question in his eyes. Hadhrat Qasim begins, "Uncle, I have come to ask your permission to enter the battle."

Imam Husayn (A) lovingly gazes at his nephew, who is the spitting image of his brother, Imam Hasan (A). How can he let this young boy who is only a young teenager, face such a bloodthirsty enemy?

Imam Husayn (A) refuses to give his permission, but Hadhrat Qasim insists. He asks him again, kissing his hands. "Please Uncle, let me go, let me defend you, let me defend Islam. My heart will not rest until I have fought to protect the message of Truth!"

He is begging so sincerely that finally, Imam Husayn (A) can no longer deny his request. He looks at Hadhrat Qasim's face and kisses him as he says, "Go, my dearest child, I give you my permission."

When we are young, it seems as if our whole life is stretched out before us. We still have to grow up, become adults, go to university, get married, and have kids of our own. When it comes to religion, it seems like we have all the time in the world. We're only five, ten, twelve, fourteen years old…when we get older, we'll learn more about Islam. When we get older, we'll start to pray, or read the Quran, or learn about the Prophet, or think about our responsibilities to the Imam of our time. Right now, we are young, how can anyone expect us to be the representatives of Islam? Right now, all we have to do is go to school and worry about the latest style or if we have the newest phone or video game. Right now, all that matters is being young and enjoying life to its fullest. Or is it?

When we look back to Karbala, we see there is a young boy named Hadhrat Qasim, who comes to his uncle, begging for the chance to be brave; to show the enemy that even with swords and spears, they can't take away his spirit, the true essence of who he is. There are his cousins, Aun and Muhammad, who are also close to him in age, yet also come to ask their uncle the same question. Youth, who are talented, intelligent, and beautiful. Who have years ahead of them that could be filled with money and power if that's what they truly wanted. If they didn't want to, they didn't have to fight. They could have worried about what the enemy would - not just say, but do - to them, if they took a stand and entered that battlefield. They could have been nervous that they would stand out – not just to a group of their friends, but to an army of thousands; not just people who would ignore them, but who would look at them with angry eyes, laughing and cursing in their direction before cutting their bodies to pieces.

But to these youth, none of that matters.

To them, being young will never,ever stop them from remembering Allah or making good choices. They will practice modesty — not when they have lost their beauty, but when they are at its peak. They will give up their personal desires — not when death seems close, but when it still seems so far away. They will choose to love Allah, and work so that Allah loves them, not caring what anyone might say or think of them, as long as Allah is happy with them – and they will do it, no matter what their age may be.

Hadhrat Qasim, like his cousins before him, heads into battle, fighting bravely. The army surrounds and attacks him. Imagine the scene: the bones of a youth being cut through by charging men on horses. The blood of a youth being spilled across Karbala's sands. But still, the face of a warrior, a shining light in the darkness. A young boy, teaching the world and the centuries to come, what it means to be a servant of Allah.

Imagine, the yelling of the soldiers as they hit him. Feel in your bones, the strength it takes to fight back. To not run from the battlefield, no matter how much pain they want you to feel. Imagine how someone so young could have responded so bravely to their yells, “If you don’t know me, I am the son of Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet; I am Qasim, from the family of Ali (A)!”

And imagine, a soldier coming forward and striking Hadhrat Qasim’s head. Hadhrat Qasim falling to the ground with the cry, “O dear Uncle, come to my aid!” Imam Husayn (A) enters the battlefield like a wild falcon, scattering the forces of the enemy. And, after the dust settles, Imam Husayn (A) cradles Hadhrat Qasim to his chest, saying, “By God! It is difficult for your Uncle that he could not come to your aid when you called, or that he answered, but it could not help you!”

In death, Hadhrat Qasim smiles, and in his smile, Imam Husayn (A) sees the boy of the night before, whose young face looked up at him in a tent full of men; the boy who knew that when the sun would rise, all would be killed; the boy who knew his youth would soon end, and still asked, “Uncle, am I, too, included in the list of martyrs?”

Hearing the passion in his question, Imam Husayn (A) had responded, “O my dear son! How do you see death (in the way of Allah)?”

Hadhrat Qasim had smiled — the smile that rests even now on his bloodstained face — and responded, “It is sweeter than honey.”

Speech #8: Befriending Our Imam (aj)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Salaamun Alaykum, everyone. We are gathered here on the eighth night of Muharram, soon approaching the night of Ashura. Tonight, we want to talk about something that all of us have: friends. We all have friends whom we know and love. However, our friends can't be with us forever. We can't have them by our sides every second of our lives. Not even our parents can't be with us at all times. There is only one person who can be with us all times and in all places: our Imam (aj). He is with us every moment of our lives, and we can connect with him while doing anything — walking, talking, and even sleeping.

How is our connection to Imam (AJ) different from relationships we have with our family and friends? One difference is we can tell our Imam (AJ) things we wouldn't tell others. For example, we sometimes have personal problems we don't tell even our closest friends out of fear they will become angry or won't understand - however, there is someone who *always* understands and will never get angry, and that is our Imam (AJ). Imam (AJ) loves us more than our own parents do - he is eager to help us! In addition, we know that we can always trust our Imam (AJ) because he has perfect knowledge of everything. Sometimes even the wisest around us are wrong and do not have the solution to our problems, but with our Imam (AJ) this is never the case - whatever you're experiencing, he understands it perfectly and knows *exactly* the solution. He knows us better than we know ourselves!

Never forget that the Imam (AJ) is your best friend — he can support, protect, and guide you more than anyone else can. We just have to build our connection with him so that we always turn to him for help. How can we do this?

How to Connect to our Imam (AJ)

One special way we can connect to our Imam (AJ) is by writing letters to him. These letters are called arizas. People usually do this on his birthday, the 15th of Sha'baan, but you can write a letter any day of the year! The Imam (AJ) receives this letter and knows what we have written on it even before we send it! You can write anything you want in this letter: your hopes, fear, worries, wishes, and prayers. InshaAllah, with the permission of Allah, the Imam will grant you what you ask for.

Another way we can connect to our Imam (aj) is simply by calling out to him, especially during difficult times. Because Imam (AJ) can be anywhere and everywhere, whenever we are in need, we can call on him by calling out, "Ya Mahdi Adrikni — Oh Mahdi, help me)!" This is one of the best ways to call upon our Imam (AJ).

Another way we can connect with our Imam (aj) is by connecting with his lovers, our fellow believers. One day, Prophet Muhammad (s) was at the masjid talking to people about Imam al-Mahdi (AJ). He told them that during the time of our 12th Imam (AJ), people will not be able to see him physically, but they will still be able to have a connection to him. Hearing this, one of the companions asked how one could have a connection to an Imam they can't see. The Prophet (s) answered that one will be able to have a connection to him by having a connection with the lovers of the Ahlul Bayt. So, if we want to have a connection to our Imam (AJ), one way we can do this is by being connected to *each other*. The Prophet (s) told them that in the time of our Imam's (AJ) ghayba, the believers must be closely connected to one another and look after one another.[1]

1 Yanābīʿ al-Mawaddah, P. 432

If one important way to connect to our Imam (AJ) is by connecting to his followers, we need to know how to create and maintain those connections. Most of us already have connections and friendships with other followers like ourselves, alhamdulillah, so now the most important thing is to avoid things that break those connections. For example, we should avoid saying hurtful things to each other. But imagine that your friend does say something that hurts you? How should you react? Many times, people stop talking to each other when they have a fight, but why does this happen? One major reason is Shaytaan! He whispers to us and wants us to turn against one another and see each other as enemies, but this isn't good.

Of course there *are* times our friends or family do or say things that are hurtful, but that does not make them our enemies — it simply means you need to talk to each other and resolve these issues peacefully. *Not* talking and deciding to leave that person is exactly what Shaytaan wants us to do; he wants to ruin our friendships and make us ignore one another. In the Quran it says,

Surely, Shaytaan creates fights between the believers (17:53).

We must be careful not to listen to his whispers and always communicate with one another about how we feel and what bothers us. When we do this, we are able to understand one another and fix the problems between us, inshaAllah.

The Best Gift for a Friend

Speaking of friends, what *is* a best friend? What makes someone a true friend? A true friend is someone who brings you closer to Allah, since that is our ultimate purpose after all.

One day, Imam as-Sadiq (a) was giving a speech in Masjid an-Nabi to an audience that was made up of all kinds of people — old, young, rich, poor, Arab, non-Arab, etc. There was one young boy in the audience, about 12 or 13 years, named Hisham bin Hakam. He stood up and asked the Imam (a), "What is the best gift I can give to a friend?"

The 6th Imam (a) smiled and told him, "MashaAllah, you are so great, brave, and intelligent!" He then said, "The best gift you can give to others is to show them their flaws and shortcomings."[2]

What?! The best gift we can give someone is telling them what's wrong with them? Does this mean you should point out every little mistake your friend does? No, of course not! First and foremost, we must focus on *our own* mistakes and not search for others' mistakes. And then, what the Imam means is that when you see your friend struggling or you see an area where they can improve (e.g., he/she doesn't share well with others or is impatient), you must help them by *kindly* pointing it out to them in secret. To tell them in secret is very important. We should never expose our friends' problems or make them feel bad in front of others, just as you wouldn't want them to do that to you. You must also let them know that your are telling them this in order to help *them* improve, just as a construction worker finds all the flaws in a building so that he can make it stronger. *That* is a true friendship.

We pray that Allah gives us all good friends and helps us to be even better friends, especially when it comes to befriending our Imam, Imam az-Zaman (aj)!

2 Mīzān al-Ḥikmah, Vol. 7, P. 149

Museebah: Hadhrat Ali Akbar

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

As we sit here in the majalis of Aba Abdillah, thousands upon thousands of angels are waiting for permission from Allah to come down to Earth so that they, too, can participate in these majaalis — so that they, too, can shed just one tear for Imam Husayn (a).

Tonight, we want to remember the loss of a son. But this son was not just an ordinary son. Ali Akbar was somebody who was extremely special. We're told that when people used to long for the Prophet (S), when they would miss Rasulullah, they would look at Ali Akbar. Ali Akbar — who was an example of the Prophet (S) in his speech, in his character, and in his looks as well. This statement is very important. Allah tells us in the Quran that our Prophet had the best of character. He was *Rahmatul lil 'alameen* — a mercy to the worlds — and *sirajan muneera* — a bright lantern to humanity. Ali Akbar had these same characteristics. He was somebody who was extremely good and pious. He was a light among the people. He was a great young man, and he was someone whom Imam Husayn (a) loved very dearly.

You all know how much a parent loves their child. Most people live their lives, and their parents pass away before they do. But when a parent has to face the loss of a child before they do, this is something that is extremely difficult for a heart to take.

Let us take our hearts to this heartbreaking scene. It was the day of Ashura, and one by one, the companions of Imam Husayn (a) give their lives, showing their bravery on the battlefield. Not a single one hesitated to serve the Imam of their time. But the companions were numbered. Finally, it came to a point where there were no companions left. The Ahlul Bayt (a) saw these acts of bravery one after another, but now their time had come to give their lives.

The first among them to say he wants to go to the battlefield is the son of Imam Husayn (a). Ali Akbar asks his father for permission to go to the battlefield. We are told that Imam Husayn (a) gives his son permission to go without any hesitation at all. But at the same time, as the father is watching his son turn away from him for maybe the last time, the eyes of our Imam (a) are filled with tears.

Why is our Imam crying? On one hand, he is content with the will of Allah. He knows that he must sacrifice his son, and that his son must be sacrificed in front of his own eyes; but on the other hand, he is a father. This is a scene of contentment with the will of Allah and compassion for very beloved son.

Ali Akbar is approaching the battlefield. Imam Husayn (a) cries out, "O Allah! Bear witness that there is a young man who is going forth who most resembles your Prophet in his looks, characteristics, and speech. Whenever we would wish to look to our prophet, we would look to him!"

Ali Akbar is facing the enemy army. He cries out, "*Ana Ali ibn Husayn ibn Ali* — I am Ali, the son of Husayn, the son of Ali. We are, by Allah, more deserving to this right than anyone else. Do you not see how I protect my father?"

Ali Akbar is on his horse fighting the enemy army. It is one man against so many. Ali Akbar fights so bravely and so strongly. But after some time, there is a strange scene, one which has not been seen all day in karbala. The young man who is fighting suddenly begins returning back to his camp. Is he scared? Is he running away? God forbid that he would do such a thing! Is it that he is thirsty and tired? No! This is Ali Akbar. Brothers and sisters, if you had the chance to meet the Imam of your time before you died, wouldn't you do so? This is what Ali Akbar wishes to do. He comes to his father one last time and says, "O Father, the weight of this armor is so heavy! And my thirst is killing me. If only there was some way to get some water!" Imam Husayn (a) looks at his son. Imagine what a father would say to his son who is so thirsty, but he has no water to give. He tells him "O my son, be patient! Soon, you will meet your grandfather, who will give you a drink after which you will never be thirsty!"

After hearing this, Ali Akbar is recharged. He returns to the battlefield and fights for some time. But there is one man named ibn Munqidh (*la'natullahi ʿalayh*) who is determined to kill the son of Husayn (a). He prepares his spear, waiting for the right moment. He wanted to go down in history for being the first killer of the family of the Ahlul Bayt (a) on the Day of Ashura. Alas, he throws his spear, and it hits Ali Akbar, who is thrown off his horse.

Ali Akbar cries out, "Ya Abata! Alayka salam! — O my father, I send you my salam! I see my grandfather— (that promise of Imam Husayn (a) has come true) — he has quenched my thirst and he is telling you hurry up and join us!"

Imam Husayn (a) is watching this scene. He hears his son, but now there is a whole army who has gathered around the body of Ali Akbar. They know who this young man is. They see the Imam (a) standing there, but O enemies, don't you see that it is not just the Imam watching?! There is a lady who is also watching what is going on! Zaynab (sa) comes out and is watching what is happening to her nephew. O enemy, stop! Don't do that! How can you do this to this young man, who so resembled the Prophet (S) that you claim to follow! Zaynab cries out, "Ya habeebaah wabna akhaah! O my beloved one! O my nephew!"

Imam Husayn (a) goes to the body of his son and put his cheek on the cheek of his son as he cries out, "O life! You are not worth living after this!"

La'anatullahi 'alaa qawm idh-dhaalimeen

Speech #9: Tawassul to Our Imam (aj)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

Salaamun alaykum my dear brothers and sisters, and welcome to this blessed gathering. Tonight is the 9th night of Muharram. Can you imagine what must be going on in the camp of Imam Husayn (a) tonight? What must be going through Zaynab's mind? How must Abbas be preparing for battle? How can he deal with the cries of *al-atash* — the thirst, the thirst? Ya Allah, please accept our acts and our tears in these nights. Please help us to become better and make good choices.

Before I begin today's speech, I would like to briefly discuss what we learned last night and connect it with what we will learn tonight.

In yesterday's speech, we discussed how Imam az-Zaman (AJ) is our closest friend and that although we can't see him physically, we can have a strong connection to him. The Noble Prophet (s) told us one of the best ways to connect to our Imam (AJ) in this time is to connect with those who love him, and that sitting with those who love him is like sitting with the Imam (AJ) himself.

One of the best places we can connect with lovers of our Imam (AJ) is the masjid or an Islamic school. We come here regularly exactly for that reason — we love Imam Husayn (a) and want to be around others who also love him.

Our Imam Knows All

Yesterday, I mentioned that even though our Imam is not with us physically, we can still talk to him because he can see and hear us. In fact, our Imams know everything we do. One amazing thing about our Imams is that because they are so close to Allah, they have knowledge of everything — nothing in creation is hidden from them. Let me share a story about our 7th Imam that shows us this.

Our 7th Imam, Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a), was a great leader with many friends and students.

One of his best students was Safwan al-Jamal. Safwan loved the Imam very much and was always very excited to see him. He always had many questions to ask him but as soon as he saw the Imam, he would become nervous and forget what he wanted to ask. The Imam (a) would then calm him down with a hug and a big smile and answer each of his questions. Safwan was always amazed that Imam (a) knew his questions before even asking them! This hidden knowledge comes from Allah.

The name al-Jamal means camel. Safwan was given this title because his job was to took care of camels, and at that time, people were given titles based on their profession.

Safwan al-Jamal was from Kufa, one of the most beautiful cities of Iraq during that time.

Kufa was also the capital of Imam Ali (a) for five years, during which he improved the city's infrastructure. At that time, people had to dig wells to get their water, but Imam Ali (a) created a system through which this was no longer necessary and water was readily available.

Another companion of Imam Musa al Kadhim (a) was Ali bin Yaqtin. Ali bin Yaqtin was very smart and quick to learn. Anything that Imam al-Kadhim (a) taught him, he quickly understood. As Ali bin Yaqtin's

status rose higher and higher, Haroon Rashid — the khalifah of the time — offered him a position as minister, the highest position at that time after the khalifah.

Ali bin Yaqtin was not willing to accept this position. He knew that Haroon was an evil tyrant and worried that if he worked under him, he would be taking part in Haroon's oppression of the people. So, he went to Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a) for advice. The Imam (a) told Ali bin Yaqtin that accepting the position would be good as long as he use it to help the needy. Ali bin Yaqtin accepted the position and became the minister of finance for the government of the khalifah.

Since Ali bin Yaqtin had one of the highest positions at the time, everyone always wanted to see him. This is just like people always today want to see celebrities or people with high government positions. Not only did Ali bin Yaqtin hold a high social status, but he was also very smart, so whenever he went for Hajj, people surrounded him, wanting to ask him questions. Upon getting so much attention, little by little, Ali bin Yaqtin grew a little arrogant. *I am so great and important,* he thought. *Look at all these people who want to be around me!*

One day, Safwan al-Jamal, who was walking to Hajj all the way from Kufa, heard about Ali bin Yaqtin and wanted to meet him. He thought, *He is so smart and famous — I want to meet him and shake his hand.* So, after completing his Hajj, he went off to find Ali bin Yaqtin.

Safwan went to the the Ka'bah and saw Ali bin Yaqtin surrounded by rich people. He rushed to meet him and greeted him, "Salaamun alaikum, O Ali bin Yaqtin!" Ali ibn Yaqtin shook his hand, but didn't really pay much attention to him. Safwan was heart-broken — he had come all this way to see Ali bin Yaqtin! Then, he spoke to Imam (a) in his heart, "O Imam, he is one of your companions. I came all this way to meet him, but he ignored me."

Meanwhile, Ali bin Yaqtin headed to Medina, where he once lived, to visit Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a) and the grave of the Noble Prophet (s) and Jannat ul Baqi, where four of our Imams are buried. After completing his ziyarah, Ali bin Yaqtin went to visit Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a). He was so excited to tell him about all the good things he had done, like helping the needy and performing Hajj and ziyarat. When he arrived at the Imam's (a) house, he knocked on the door, but there was no answer. He knocked a second time, a third time — still no answer. Ali bin Yaqtin was confused. He had done all these good things for the sake of Allah and the Imam (a), so why wasn't the Imam (a) opening the door?

Finally, one of the students of the Imam (a) opened the door and told Ali bin Yaqtin that the Imam (a) was not happy with him and did not want to see him. Ali bin Yaqtin began to cry and asked what had happened. The student delivered the following message from the Imam: "You broke the heart of one of my companions, a good mu'min, Safwan al-Jamal. I don't want to see you until you ask for his forgiveness. If he forgives you, then you may come visit me."

Ali bin Yaqtin rode his horse as fast as he could and reached Kufa after several weeks. He searched all over the city for Safwan and finally found him on his farm taking care of his camels. Ali bin Yaqtin called out to him, "Assalaamu alayka ya habibul Imam (a)" — Peace be upon you O friend of Imam (a)!

Ali bin Yaqtin told Safwan what happened at the house of Imam (a) and told him, "If you forgive me, I can go see the Imam (a)."

Of course, Safwan forgave Ali ibn Yaqtin and said, " I was a little hurt that you ignored me, but you did not have to come all the way here to apologize!"

Ali replied, "Yes, I *did* have to come all the way here! I want to lie here on the ground while you put your

foot on my cheek."

Safwan was surprised and told him "No, that is not possible!"

But Ali bin Yaqtin insisted, "No — put your foot right on my face and say, 'I forgive you.'" Safwan did not accept and told him this was not necessary to gain his forgiveness.

Ali bin Yaqtin told him "No, I want to go to my Imam (a) with a happy face."

Safwan forgave Ali bin Yaqtin, who then happily returned to Medina. When he reached Medina, he saw Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a) waiting for him at the entrance of the city, and with a big smile, he hugged Ali bin Yaqtin.

Ali bin Yaqtin told the Imam (a), "O Imam, I am so sorry! I've learned my lesson, and I will never hurt anyone again. For a moment, I thought that I was so great because of all the good things I had done, but now I've realized that the great person is one who cares about others and doesn't hurt them."

So you see, from this story, we can learn many lessons. One important lesson that we can learn is that our Imam (a) is always aware of our actions. Did you know that every monday and Thursday, our Imam (a) gets a record of our actions for the week? It's kind of like a report card that tells him how we are doing. When you know your parents are going to get your report card, don't you want to make sure you have good grades so that they become happy? Well, we should also try to make sure that our Imam feels happy when he gets our weekly report card.

Tawassul

When we know and understand that our Imam sees and hears all, this helps us build a stronger connection with him. We know our Imam loves us and wants what is best for us. He is there to help us in all situations. One of the best ways we can get our du'as answered is actually through our Imam. We can do tawassul and ask Imam Mahdi (aj) to pray for us. This means that we ask Allah through our Imam. Since Allah loves him and he is closer to Him, we have a better chance of getting our du'as answered.

While sitting in the majlis, we sometimes have questions or problems that need solving and we seek Allah's help with our hearts. The Noble Prophet (s) said "Indeed if you ask Allah through our intercession, Allah will answer your prayer." There is no doubt about this. So, in your hearts, ask Allah for your needs through the Imam of the time, and see how quickly these du'as are answered, as long as they're good for us, inshaAllah.

Museebah: Hadhrat Abul Fadhlil Abbas

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Tonight is dedicated to one of the greatest shuhada: Abul Fadhl al-Abbas, the brother of Imam Husayn (a) and the uncle of Sakina. Let us begin with a story about Abbas (a).

At the battle of Siffin, people saw that Imam Ali (a) gave a young boy of 12 or 13 years permission to fight. Although young, he was strong, tall, and handsome. Seeing he was just a boy, the enemies thought they could defeat him easily. Around 30 to 40 people volunteered to Mu'awiya to go fight him, and Abbas defeated all of them.

From that point on, Abbas became known as the lion of the Ahlul Bayt. He was also known as "Qamar Bani Hashim" — the Moon of Bani Hashim (the Ahlul Bayt). Abbas (a) is the door to Imam Husayn (a).

Because Abbas was the bravest and most courageous, he was appointed as the commander-in-chief and flag-bearer of Imam Husayn's (a) army. On the 7th of Muharram, the enemies stopped the army of Imam Husayn (a) from getting water from the Furat river — thousands of soldiers were guarding it, and no one was able to get near the water. Everyone was thirsty, especially the children.

When the enemies attacked on the day of Ashura, all the companions of Imam Husayn (a) were eager to get his permission to fight. Abbas was the first to ask for permission. Imam Husayn (a) told him, "No, you can't go. You are our flagbearer and the bravest among us. It's because of you that the children have courage and hope."

Abbas waited while the other companions fought one by one, each becoming shaheed. It was getting harder and harder for Abbas to wait — he was eager to fight, to do anything to help Imam Husayn (a)! When Imam Husayn (a) saw Abbas, he told him, "May my life be sacrificed for you, Abbas!" This shows what high a status Abbas had in the eyes of Imam Husayn (a) and Allah.

Our 4th Imam (a) has said, "Indeed, [my uncle] Abbas will have such a high status on the Day of Judgment that all the other shuhadah will be in awe and want such a status."[1] Why? Because of his bravery and dedication to Imam Husayn (a).

Abbas finally came to Imam Husayn (a) and said, "O my master, there is no one left. My chest is heavy — I want to help and do something." Imam Husayn (a) still did not give him permission and instead told him "No, the children feel safe seeing you."

Abbas saw the children were very thirsty. For three days, there was no water in the camp of Imam Husayn (a). The army of Yazid was spilling water on the ground in front of the children and feeding their animals water in front of them to make them more upset. Abbas talked to the children and told them, "Let's go and ask Imam Husayn (a). If he gives me permission, I will go get some water." Together, they went to Imam Husayn (a).

They all gathered around Imam Husayn (a) and said, "O Husayn, O Imam, please give Abbas permission to get water for us." Seeing the thirst of the children, Imam Husayn (a) gave Abbas permission to go.

Abbas was happy to go. When he reached the river, he filled the container with water. He looked at the water and was about to drink some but stopped and threw it back in the river when he remembered his thirsty Imam (a) and the children waiting for him. He dropped the water and said, "No! How can I, when my brother, my Imam is thirsty?!"

Abbas began riding back to the tents. Maybe he was thinking, *Finally, the children will get some water!* Maybe Sakina was telling the thirsty children, "Don't worry! My uncle Abbas will bring water. Soon, we

1 Biḥār ul-Anwār, Vol. 22, P. 274

will quench our thirst!"

Suddenly, a man ambushed Abbas, cutting off his right arm. Ignoring the pain, Hadhrat Abbas switched the water-skin to his left arm. Again, the man struck, severing his left arm. Hadhrat Abbas had lost both hands!

But how can I return to the tents empty-handed? he must have been thinking. *How can I look upon the faces of those sweet children and have nothing to offer them? I must go on.* He was a warrior, and the children were his heart. He was not going to stop until their thirst was quenched.

Hadhrat Abbas now held the water-skin with his teeth, but the enemy knew no bounds. An arrow struck his mouth, piercing the water-skin with it, and water and blood trickled onto the weeping sands.

As the water drained from the water-bag, the hopes of the thirsty children drained with it. Suddenly, an arrow was shot straight into the chest of Hadhrat Abbas.

A tragic cry rang through the skies of Karbala, "O brother! Find me!"

Imam Husayn (A) raced towards Hadhrat Abbas' voice and saw a flag fallen on the desert sands, drenched in the blood of his flag-bearer. He rushed toward it and fell to his knees next to the broken body of his brother. Laying Hadhrat Abbas' head in his lap, Imam Husayn wiped the blood from his eye and face. The Imam (A) was so close to his brother that the arrow that was planted in Hadhrat Abbas' chest had also pierced a hole in Imam Husayn's heart.

Abbas was ashamed to go back to the children empty handed and asked that Imam Husayn (a) leave him there. When Imam Husayn (a) returned to the camp, the children came to him crying and said, "O Husayn, O Imam (a), we won't ask for water anymore — we just want our uncle Abbas back."

Imam Husayn (a) said, "O children, now you must be brave and prepare yourselves. Now that Abbas is gone, nothing will stop the enemies from attacking you."

Speech #10: The Importance of Quran

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِى الْاَرَضِين

The Night of Ashura

Tonight is the night of Ashura, the night before the 10th of Muharram, and while sitting here on this great night, we want to seek Allah's blessings. I see tonight that we have many children in this majlis — let us remember that Imam Husayn (a) had only 72 with him in his army. The youngest was only 6 months old, Ali Asghar, and the oldest was more than 90 years old. That was the army of Imam Husayn (a).

To come to the majlis of Imam Husayn (a) is not that easy. It is not up to us — it is a blessing from Allah. On this great night, the angels are asking Allah for special permission to come to Earth and attend the majlis of Imam Husayn (a), after which they will return to the heavens with all the blessings and bounties.

On the night of Ashura, the commander of Yazid's army, Umar ibn Sa'd, announced they were going to attack Imam Husayn (a)'s army. They began shooting arrows at the army of Imam Husayn (a) and Yazid's army, made up of thousands, surrounded Imam Husayn's (a) small army of 72.

When Imam Husayn (a) saw this, he told his brother Abbas to ask Yazid's army for one last night — they agreed.

Imam Husayn (a) and his companions gathered together and read many du'as on their last night. One of the best things they did this night was recite Quran. In a hadith, the Noble Prophet (s) says, "The best of you are those who learn Quran and teach it [to others]."

An Old Man Goes to School

When Imam Ali (a) became the khalifah, he decided to move from Medina to Kufa and made Kufa his capital. At this time, he announced that every single person — young or old — should gain knowledge. He opened schools so that everyone, no matter their age or status, could attend. One day, some children were walking to school and saw an old man with a long beard and a cane walking to school as well.

Others began laughing and making fun of him. Sadly, they didn't see the value in gaining knowledge and could not understand why someone would want to attend school at such an old age.

When he reached school, the children thought this old man was the teacher and stood up out of respect. He told them, "I'm not the teacher. I'm actually a student and will be learning, just like all of you." Some of the children laughed and asked, "You are going to learn *now*?"

The old man replied, "Yes, I want to learn the Quran because I heard from the Noble Prophet (s) that the best people are those who learn and read the Quran, and I want to be among the best people."

"What's the point of learning the Quran *now*?" one student asked him. "You are so old, you might not even live until tomorrow!"

The old man asked, "Tell me, is it better to die with some knowledge of the Quran or to die with no

knowledge at all?"

When Imam Ali (a) heard about this old man, he went to meet him at the school. The Imam (a) kissed his hand and told him, "Congratulations to you and your dedication on this path. Allah loves you!" He brought the old man to the front and told everyone, "Indeed, this man has courage and passion to learn — he should be your leader."

When you all go to school to learn, whether it be Quran, akhlaq, math, or any other subject, you are welcomed not only by those in your school, but also by the angels and the Imam (AJ) of our time. In fact, there is a hadith that tells us that angels spread out their wings for someone who is on their way to learn and gain knowledge. Right now, here in this majlis, the Imam (AJ) has welcomed you and all of us. What a great blessing!

The Importance of Reading Quran

So we know that it is important for us to learn, but I want to focus on the importance of learning Quran. It is important for us to learn to read the Quran because it is the book of Allah and is full of lessons for us. The Quran is a remedy, a cure, and for each letter you read Allah rewards you. Once we learn to read Arabic, the next step is to learn the meaning of the words so that we can understand what we read — this is called *Mafahim al-Quran*. After all, we can only live and act according to the Quran if we understand what it's telling us.

Once we can read and understand the Quran, the next step is to put it into practice. For example, the Quran tells us *"Wa bil walidayni ihsaana" - be kind and good to your parents* (17:23). This is something we all know, but we also need to practice it at home. We often take our parents for granted, forgetting that there are many children who have lost theirs! Another example is the verse *"Innallaha yuhibbul mutahhireen" - Allah loves those who are pure/clean* (2:222). The teachings of the Quran are for *our* sake, because for example, it is good for *us* to be clean and pure. Whether we decide to practice this or not is not going to harm/affect Allah in the least — He does not need us to follow His guidelines. But it does help us in this world and the next.

On the night of Ashura, Imam Husayn (a) and his companions were busy reading and reflecting on the Quran. They knew this was their last night, so they wanted to take advantage and make sure they were ready to meet Allah.

On that night, Imam Husayn (a) gathered all the children and asked who among them knew how to read Quran, and one by one, they all took turns reading. Imam Husayn (a) was very happy to see them reciting the Quran. The fact that Imam Husayn (a) gave such importance to Quran even on the night of Ashura shows us its importance. It teaches us that the Quran is a *shifa*, a cure, from Allah and that we should spend more time trying to understand it.

We know that Prophet Muhammad (s) said, "Indeed, I am leaving behind two precious things: the Quran and the Ahlul Bayt." We can see these two precious and weighty things merging on this night of Ashura.

On the night of Ashura, after everyone was asleep, Imam Husayn (a) began to read Surah Fajr. His daughter Sakina, who was in the tent next to him, heard him reciting and ran to her father to sit beside him. She told him, "O my father, I want to stay with you."

Imam Husayn (a) replied, "O Sakina, you are young. It is time for you to sleep."

Sakina said, "But I cannot sleep! Whenever I want to sleep, I feel I want to be with you for just a few more seconds." Sakina's younger brother Ali Asghar, only 6 months old, was also restless and wanted to be

with his father. Maybe hey just wanted one more night to hear their father's beautiful voice and recitation because they knew they would not hear this soothing voice again.

Museebah: Ali Asghar

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

The night of Ashura is a special night. On this night, we want to go to Karbala and sit next to Imam Husayn (a) and receive blessings through him. But how can we go to Karbala while we are here? Our 6th Imam (a) has a beautiful solution. He has said, "Wherever in the world there is a majlis, Allah turns that place into the shrine of Imam Husayn (a)."[1]

Close your eyes and imagine the scene on the day of Ashura. The hot rays of the sun pound down on blood-drenched sands, filled with nothing but silence.

Every friend, brother, nephew, and son has been killed. Their bodies lie across the desert plains, and each glance at them is a twisting arrow's pain in Imam Husayn's (A) heart. The battle still echoes in Imam Husayn's (A) ears: every call for justice, every cry for help, every last salaam.

Today, Imam Husayn (A) has been witness to many final breaths. Today, he has wept for many companions. Today, he has seen many fallen soldiers brought back to the tents. Today, he can still feel the weight of the bodies he carried back in his arms.

Imam Husayn's (A) tongue may be thirsty, but his heart is caught in an ocean of sadness. There is no one left but him. No one to protect his women, no one to run a loving hand over the heads of his children. After his death, they will be left alone in this land of tears and blood.

In a final cry for help, a final effort to awaken a conscience in a sleeping enemy, Imam Husayn (A) calls out, "Is there anyone who will defend the family of the Prophet of Allah?"

His voice echoes, unanswered, through the empty air. Silence.

Hearing his call, the women in the camp begin to weep. Imam Husayn (A) comes to the door of the tent and asks to hold his son, Ali Asghar. "Give me my infant child so that I may bid him farewell…"

Imam Husayn (A) holds his baby in his arms, cradling the deepest part of his heart, the most beloved light of his eyes. There is a pain in him that will not stop as he sees the pain of Ali Asghar's thirst, the paleness of his face, his dry tongue running over and over his lips.

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1 Tarjumah Khaṣāʾiṣ al-Ḥusayniyyah, P. 256

Imam Husayn (A) calls out to the enemy, “O people! If you do not feel sorry for me, at least feel sorry this child!”

When they see this baby crying, how do their eyes remain dry? When they see his tongue is dry, how do theirs remain wet? Won’t they give his son a few drops to drink?

In what society, in what time, is the cry of a child threatening to an enemy? Why do the commanders of the army stand in fear, becoming nervous as they watch their soldiers shift, perhaps for the first time today, hesitating to act? What is it in the chapped lips of Ali Asghar that scares grown men; what is it in the gentleness of his face that threatens to defeat their cause with a single glance?

He cannot stand in the battlefield to defend his father. But with the innocence of his cries, he seems to rush forward, his tears like arrows striking the hearts of the enemy. Ali Asghar could not speak, but with his tears, he put fear into the heart of the enemy; he showed them that even as an infant, they did not scare him; even as a child, they could not defeat him.

Ali Asghar knows he will not be there to see what happens to his mother and sisters and aunts after him. He knows he cannot tell them goodbye. Instead he looks towards them and smiles for the last time.

The neck of a baby is what a father would bend down to kiss. But Ali Asghar’s neck is not greeted by loving lips. Instead, an arrow fulfills this kiss. Shot from the bow of a cruel man named Harmala, the arrow pierces itself deep into his neck.

Imam Husayn (A) cries out, and the skies thunder in anger. The blood of this sweet child gathers in Imam Husayn's (A) hands, and the air which was just filled with Ali Asghar’s cries becomes silent. The father casts the blood of his son into the sky as Ali Asghar’s small body no longer moves.

Using his sword, Imam Husayn (A) digs a small grave for his son. The heart cannot stay inside its chest when it imagines how small this grave must be! How little does a father have to dig to bury the tiny body of his son? How many tears must fall as he lays his sweet Ali Asghar to sleep forever? How must his mother be weeping in pain, calling out to her baby son, I could not quench your thirst my dear Ali Asghar. Instead, an arrow quenched it with your blood. *Innalillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’oon.*

Speech #11: Day of Ashura

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد

وَعَلى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ الله فِي الْاَرَضِين

My dear brothers and sisters, I'd like to extend my condolences to all the Shi'a of Imam Ali (a), and especially to the Imam (AJ) of our time, on this tragic day. We pray that next year and in the years to come, we will have the opportunity to perform the ziyarah of Imam Husayn (a) on Ashura and Arbaeen, inshaAllah.

Over the past 10 days, we have had the opportunity to mourn for and pay tribute to Imam Husayn (a) in these majaalis. Now the day we have been waiting for has arrived. We have come here out of love for our master, Imam Husayn (a), and with our hearts we say, "O Husayn (a)! We were not with you in Karbala when you said, '*hal min nasirin yansuruna*,' but we are here today to say 'Labbayk! Here I am!' to that call."

Whoever comes to the majalis of Imam Husayn (a) leaves with a clean heart and increased success, provided they come with ma'rifah — belief and understanding.

Our 4th Imam (a) says, "Whoever attends the majaalis of Imam Husayn (a) leaves like Hurr: clean and pure." However, this is only if we come with an understanding of why we we're here in the first place. Anyone can read about Imam Husayn (a) and his mission, but not everyone understands its significance and meaning. The companions of Imam Husayn (a) had *ma'rifah* — they understood who their Imam (a) was, and anyone who knows their Imam (a) also knows the importance of following him. Some joined at the last minute and had just become Muslim, like Wahab Qalbi. The companions of Imam Husayn (a) were not great scholars, they were ordinary people who joined Imam Husayn (a) because they had *ma'rifah.*

Having Ma'rifah

What is the difference between *ma'rifah* (inner knowledge) and *ʿilm* (knowledge)? Let's look at the following example. Pretend someone finds out they have an illness. That is the first step: knowing that something is wrong. The second step is to find out what exactly *is* wrong and what the cure is. The third step is to figure out the cure and heal from the illness.

Some people take the first two steps — they know something is wrong and figure out what is wrong, but they don't take the cure and follow the doctor's advice because they don't care. They have the knowledge, the *ilm*, but not the *ma'rifah*. Ilm is to know, and ma'rifah is to realize the importance of what you know in your heart, which then leads you to act upon it.

When we attend the majlis of Imam Husayn (a), each tear we shed is a cure, but only if that tear comes from *ma'rifah*, and leads to us changing ourselves for the better. If we have ma'rifah, it is not possible to leave the majlis the same as we arrived.

A few nights ago, we talked about the following hadith: I*nnal Husayn misbahul huda wa safinatun najaat* — Surely, Husayn is the lantern of guidance and boat of rescue. What does this mean? At that time, when people traveled through the desert, they would sometimes lose their way, but there were always places far out in the desert to guide those who were lost. These places were called *misbah*. Likewise,

Imam Husayn (a) is a *misbah* for anyone who has lost their way and needs guidance back to the right path.

Imam Husayn (a) is also a boah of rescue, just as the boat of Prophet Nuh (a) rescued those who were looking to escape the flood. We board the boat of Imam Husayn (a) by keeping a connection with him, and inshAllah this will keep us safe from the dangerous waters of this world.

Someone once asked the 4th Imam (a) why the events of Karbala took place — what did Imam Husayn (a) want to do? The Imam (a) said, "Imam Husayn (a) wanted to guide those who had gone astray."

Everything Imam Husayn (a) did was not for the intention of gaining power. It was only to guide others and bring them into the light. *That* is how much our Imams (a) care about us. *That* is our Imam Husayn (a).

The Companions of Imam Husayn (a)

Now, let us go back to that tragic day and see what kind of companions Imam Husayn (a) had. What special characteristics did they have? We want to adopt those characteristics so we can become close to Imam Husayn (a) and the Imam of our time (AJ). If we don't try to build those characteristics, these majaalis and the mourning become just another ritual — something we do out of tradition and habit, not out of understanding. Among his companions were those like Hurr, who joined from the enemies' side at the last minute as soon as he realized the truth. Others were not even present in Karbala, but still sacrificed their lives for Imam Husayn (a), such as Muslim ibn Aqeel.

Then, there were those like Jaun, who was a slave. When Jaun asked Imam Husayn (a) permission to fight, Imam Husayn (a) told him, "Go Jaun, I have freed you — you are free to go (you don't need to fight)." Jaun began to cry. He said, "O my master, is it because I am a slave that you do not want my body to be among those like Ali Akbar and Qasim?" Imam Husayn (a) told him of course that was not the reason. Being a slave makes no difference in the eyes of Allah, and gave him permission to fight. When he fell off his horse and was taking his last breaths, Jaun opened his eyes and saw his head was in the lap of Imam Husayn (a). What a great status Jaun had to have the Imam with him in his final moments!

During the battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (a) looked up at the sky towards the sun. One of his companions saw this and asked him what he was doing. Imam Ali (a) replied, "I am looking to see if it is time for salaah — and it is." The companion was surprised and said, "We are in the middle of battle - how can we stop to pray salaah?" The Imam (a) replied, "That is precisely why we are here fighting in the first place. We are fighting for the sake of salaah, for the sake of connection with Allah!"

Now, let us see what the companions of Imam Husayn (a) did in Karbala when the time for salaah set in.

While the battle was taking place on the day of Ashura, one of the companions came to Imam Husayn (a) and said, "O Master, it is time for Dhuhr salaah." Imam Husayn (a) praised him for remembering salaah and they all prepared for salaah. Companions like Burair and Saeed, who had shields, stood around Imam Husayn (a) and the rest of the group for protection while they offered salaah. They had no choice because the enemies army did not stop attacking and continued to shoot arrows at Imam Husayn (a) and his companions even while they were praying.

These were the companions of Imam Husayn (a). Imam Husayn (a) said, "None (except Imam Mahdi (AJ)) will ever have companions like I have." We need to ask ourselves, if we were alive during the time of Imam Husayn (a), would we have joined him? If Imam Husayn (a) were to call on us today — if our 12th Imam (AJ) calls today — is there anything that will cause us to hesitate from answering the calls? Or will we be like those companions who stood by their Imam's side until the very last moment of their lives.

Museebah: Imam Husayn (a)

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ ٱللهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّي سَلاَمُ ٱللهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِيَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّي لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

Today is the day of Ashura. It is the afternoon of Ashura in Karbala.

Imam Husayn (A) stands all alone on the plains of an empty desert, his cloak gently flapping in the whistling wind. Close to him, his young daughter stands, guarding her eyes from the blowing sands. She follows the gentle turn of his gaze: first, it turns towards the river, resting on the body of his beloved brother; it turns towards the tents, and finds the body of his son; it glances across the plains, his breath catching as he sees the bodies of his companions, brothers, nephews, and sons.

Watching Imam Husayn (A), tears begin to spill from her eyes.

If you asked her how much she loves her Baba, she would tell you more than all the stars in the sky. If you asked her how she feels when she holds her Baba's hand, she would tell you she feels like nothing in the world can hurt her. If you asked her what it's like to hear her Baba's voice, she would tell you that when he says, I love you, my sweet daughter, it feels like her heart is smiling. If you asked her when she is the happiest, she would tell you that it is when her Baba picks her up in his arms and lifts her towards the sky.

If you asked her what hurts her the most, it is seeing her Baba cry.

She watches as Imam Husayn (A) turns towards the camp and calls out, "O Sakina! O Ruqayya! O Fatima! O Zaynab! O Umm Kulthum! My salaam be upon you all!"

Her heart begins to pound furiously inside her chest. She cries out, "O dear Father! Are you going to die?" Imam Husayn (A) responds, "What other ending could there be for someone who does not have any helper or supporter?"

If her Baba leaves her all alone in this desert, to whom will she turn? Every person who has left this camp has not returned. She remembers every last hug, and every last kiss from her family members who have left. And she knows that none of them will return to hug or kiss her again.

And now, her Baba is preparing to leave?

She turns to her father, "O Father! Please return us back to the city of Rasulullah!" She thinks of the grave of her great-grandfather Prophet Muhammad (S). Maybe they would be safe there from all of this

horror. Why do these people continue to kill them? How can they call themselves Muslim, while coming to kill the children of the Prophet themselves?

Imam Husayn (A) hugs his young daughter, holding her close to his chest. She takes in the sweet smell from his shirt and she cannot stop crying; it smells like roses, and she holds onto his neck tightly with her small hands. *I love you, my Baba! I cannot live without you!*

She watches as her Baba gets on his horse, and she wishes that she could hold onto the horse's leg to stop him from leaving. *They are going to kill my father, please don't take my father away from me…*

As Imam Husayn (A) rides away from her, tears spill rapidly down her face. She hears him say, "O God! It is You who I trust in my sadness. You are my only hope in all this violence. You are my shelter in everything that happens to me."

She has a great sadness in her heart, and she does not know how she will survive without her Baba near her side. Not only because Imam Husayn (A) is her father, but because he is also her Imam. He is the leader Allah put on earth to guide them to the path that would lead everyone back to Him.

But at the same time, she feels a sudden rush of pride, watching how strong, how noble he looks as he enters the battlefield. She is Sakina bintul Husayn ibn Ali! She is the great granddaughter of the Prophet, and even in the middle of such grief, she will not let the enemy defeat her. She will not bow her head in front of them. She will remain standing tall, just like she sees her Baba standing tall now.

Imam Husayn (A) – the most glorious lion, charges into a battlefield of sheep. He moves left, the enemy scatters right; he moves right, the enemy scatters left. In such sadness even, this lion has not been weakened; his blood is strengthened by the pain that pulses through his veins. The shadow of death has not broken his roar; it rings loudly into the sky. "I am the son of 'Ali from the Bani Hashim, and this honor is enough for me…my grandfather is the Prophet of Allah, the best among all!"

Hundreds upon hundreds of enemies fall at the strike of Imam Husayn's (A) sword. The enemy is left in awe at the strength of this son of the Lion of God. In a panic, more archers are signaled to come forward, more swordsmen are prepared. Arrows are released, darkening the sky like angry clouds, a storm falling upon Imam Husayn (A). Spears strike with savagery, piercing the body of the truest servant of Allah (swt).

Blood falls in streams, and a loud cry is heard from the depths of the desert sands. A stone is flung towards his forehead, and as he pauses to wipe the blood from his eyes, a poisoned arrow is shot, piercing his chest. The vicious wolves begin to circle, their teeth bared, snarling grins splayed across their faces. A lance is thrust forward, and Imam Husayn (A) falls from the horse's back onto the ground.

The tears choke in grief! The eyes shed blood! The heart is shattered! History watches in agony as a sword strikes and the earth quakes, severing the neck of the bravest soul. The head of Sayyid ush-Shuhada is lifted high on a spear, and the hearts of all who love him are taken with it. A call echoes through the skies: "By Allah! The Imam, son of an Imam, brother of an Imam, and father of the Imams, al-Husayn ibn Ali has been killed!"

At that moment, a dust storm descends on the land of Karbala bringing with it an intense darkness, as all that is left is the blood-red fury of the sky…

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